The Cavalier of Tennessee

Meredith Nicholson

THE CAVALIER OF TENNESSEE

The Cavalier of Tennessee opens in the turbulent days just after the Revolution. Already Jackson's star of destiny is in the ascendent. He is a man marked for success. The earlier blending of man and boy; the man of steel in maturity; the real democrat who understands the heart of the common man; the flaming belligerent "who wouldn't hurt anybody unless it was somebody who needed hurting"; the great chieftain, the leader of men, the unconquerable Jackson, who loves impetuously and who has to be in a fight or he'll die—one watches this forthright, dashing, growing figure of the Knight of the Hermitage as he travels the perilous road from the Waxhaw cabin to the White House.

A real man as well as a lofty patriot, he loves horseracing, cock-fighting and apple-toddies, can swear a good round oath on occasion, is quick to punch a head or fight a duel at the prick of honor. A friend and comrade, he inspires his followers to the last devotion. He whips the Indians. He walks home from war so that the sick may use his horses. He gives the English at New Orleans the worst licking they ever had on this continent.

And he is Old Hickory while still a young man—Old Hickory out of love and admiration for his tough endurance. No wonder he becomes the hero of his state, of the South, of the nation.

$2.50

Meredith Nicholson

1928.

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THE CAVALIER OF TENNESSEE

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THE CAVALIER OF TENNESSEE

By Meredith Nicholson

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To

MARY JAMESON JUDAH

. . . and this lady doth greatly esteem the high-souled and knightly, and eke goodly tales of the valiant; and she hath a pretty wit and a humor most beguiling; and it is the way of her heart to be kind.

—THE CHRONICLES OF ASTOLAT.

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THE CAVALIER *of* TENNESSEE

CHAPTER I

ON TO THE CUMBERLAND

"THAT'S the last case, your Honor," said the young prosecutor, bowing deferentially to the judge. "The calendar stands clear."

"Very good, Mr. Jackson. I thank you for the thorough manner in which you have presented your cases. It will always be a pleasure, sir, to see you in this jurisdiction. Court is adjourned."

Owing to the illness of the prosecutor for the eastern district of North Carolina's vast back yard, extending toward the Mississippi, Andrew Jackson, Esquire, who held a like position in the western half of the territory, had been officiating at Jonesboro.

The spectators stood while the judge retired, and then slowly dispersed. The sheriff came to the open window with a question as to the disposal of a prisoner, and the prosecutor answered tersely, in a high, rather shrill voice. He was dressed in the fringed deerskin hunting-shirt of the frontier, with breeches of like material, but for the usual moccasins he had substituted the jack-boots affected by cavalrymen of the period. He was

tall and slender, and the hunting-shirt hung loosely upon his shoulders; but he gave the impression of tremendous energy.

The alert, restless blue eyes that were the arresting feature of his long face spoke for keen intelligence; and decision and courage were expressed in his thin, firm-set lips. His long, coarse, reddish hair was tied at the neck with a string of eelskin. Above his high narrow forehead a few unruly locks rose defiantly. His fair skin had been tanned by wind and sun, and his weather-beaten aspect made him appear older than his years.

He had paused to make a notation on the back of an indictment when the scream of a woman near the door brought him instantly to attention. She had been the principal witness in a horse-stealing case, and the brother of the offender was menacing her as she left the court-room. The prosecutor vaulted the attorney's table and seized the fellow by the throat.

"You slinking cur! I'll teach you to browbeat a woman! Every word of your testimony was an infernal lie! If you bother this woman again I'll indict you for perjury—yes; by God! I'll lock you up!"

He rushed the cringing culprit to the door and kicked him into the road. This duty performed, to the delight of the loiterers, the prosecutor swung round to the weeping woman.

"Calm yourself, madam; that scoundrel won't touch you! If the judge hadn't gone I'd put the rascal under bonds for intimidating a witness. Thank you for your testimony; you told a straight story and the jury didn't question it." He turned away but paused and fumbled

in his pockets. "Kindly accept these shillings, madam, for the babies at home."

He turned to the table, swept his books and papers into a deerskin bag and was about to leave when he noticed that a man who had been present at the sessions for several days still lingered. He advanced quickly when Jackson glanced at him inquiringly.

"Pardon me, sir, I've been waiting for a chance to speak to you. I have no business, but would like to make your acquaintance. My name is John Fowler."

"I'm glad to meet you, sir," said Jackson with instinctive friendliness. "I'd noticed you here and at the tavern and thought maybe you were a litigant waiting for a hearing. Are you a settler in these parts?"

"No; I'm quite unsettled," the stranger replied with a pleasant smile. "I've made my plans to go on to the Cumberland and I hear you're familiar with that country. I expect to start west with a party that leaves Jonesboro to-morrow."

"Good!" Jackson exclaimed. "I'm leaving for Nashville myself with the same party. You do well—a stranger—not to travel the road alone. Perhaps you have friends already settled out yonder? No? Well, it's a beautiful country—the finest in the world, sir."

"All that I've heard confirms that."

"You made no mistake in turning toward the Cumberland. You are a lawyer, perhaps—or a doctor?"

Jackson frowned in his inability to determine from appearances what occupation the stranger meant to follow on the western frontier. The prosecutor was twenty-three and he judged the stranger to be some-

what his senior. He was obviously not a countryman; in speech and manner he suggested an origin and experience in more favored conditions than Jackson had known. He approximated Jackson's own height but was broad-shouldered and deep-chested; dark to swarthiness and with handsome, responsive brown eyes in which a tinge of sadness was not overlooked in Jackson's swift inventory. His blue cloth coat and high stock with dark, neatly arranged neck-cloth gave him an alien air. The two had reached the courtyard and in the sunlight they inspected each other more closely.

Fowler smiled broadly, feeling that Jackson was scrutinizing his garb with disapproval.

"I suppose these things are not proper for the wilderness, but I've bought more suitable raiment, as you will see to-morrow."

Jackson with an impatient gesture disavowed any purpose to criticize the raiment of his new acquaintance. "Your clothing is not important except as to comfort; but I suggest that you have a care as to your horses—you should have two and they should be sound."

"The nag I rode from Philadelphia is done for," said Fowler, "but I've about decided on two horses. The dealer is to see me at the tavern this evening."

"What's his name?" Jackson demanded peremptorily.

"Rathbone," Fowler replied.

"A damned scoundrel, sir!" Jackson ejaculated. "Is he trying to sell you a sorrel with a white spot on the forehead?"

"Why, yes," Fowler replied, "that's one of them; the other is a small black mare."

"I thought so! You don't want either of 'em! It's a question whether Rathbone didn't steal both those animals. You come with me, sir! A trader from Virginia arrived yesterday with half a dozen good horses. They're stabled over here where I keep mine. I don't want to presume, but you'd better let me assist in this business."

"You're very generous, sir; I shall be grateful for your help. I won't attempt to conceal from you my ignorance of horse flesh."

"You probably know things more important," remarked Jackson. "But in a new country a man can not afford to burden himself with a worthless horse, sir."

He flung his bulging pouch to a negro at the tavern door with a warning not to lose it under dire penalties, and at once led the way to a rambling log barn where the new importations from Virginia were stabled. The prosecutor immediately commanded the full attention of the trader.

Fowler was both interested and amused by the spirited manner in which the young prosecutor conducted the inspection. He seemed to note any weakness with an instinct quicker than vision. His manner was authoritative and comical in its highhanded arrogance. He kept the grinning stable boys hopping, and when he would fling round unexpectedly upon one of them who had relaxed his attention for a moment there was a perceptible shuddering among the whole group. The horses were led out singly and put through their paces. One, as to which the trader had been particularly en-

thusiastic, Jackson eliminated immediately with a disdainful wave of the hand.

"You damned scoundrel! Don't try to pull the wool over my eyes! If you'd call that mongrel a cow you'd come nearer selling it to me!"

One of the negroes tittered and Jackson withered him with a look. A lively young mare for the saddle and a heavier horse for a pack-animal finally survived the process of elimination, and Jackson subjected these to a final scrutiny, mounting each in turn for a gallop down the road for a test of wind and gait.

"This is a cash transaction, Mr. Fowler?" he inquired.

"Yes, Mr. Jackson—English gold."

Jackson named a price—fifty pounds for the two animals. The trader expostulated, declaring that it was ruinous considering the scarcity of good horses and the difficulty and peril of bringing them through the mountains.

"The price stands," said Jackson shortly and turned away.

The trader cried out detainingly as Jackson, with a word to Fowler, dismissed the matter and started toward the gate with his long definite stride. A few minutes sufficed to complete the transaction and they went at once to the tavern, where Jackson prepared a bill of sale, fortified with an affidavit of ownership, and Fowler counted out his coins.

Rathbone, the trader of whom Jackson had spoken so contemptuously, was waiting in the public room of the tavern. When Fowler explained that he had decided

against buying his horses the man began to bluster, declaring in a loud tone that he considered the trade as good as closed and had lost an opportunity to sell to another man. Jackson stepped forward quickly as Rathbone became abusive.

"That's enough, sir! I know all about this matter. Mr. Fowler hadn't committed himself to the purchase and if you'd had another chance to sell in the last twenty-four hours you know damned well you'd have jumped at it. Another word from you and I'll demand to know how you got title to those horses. You were mixed up in some very questionable business in Salisbury a while back! That sort of thing isn't permitted out here. You haven't the slightest claim on this gentleman, so clear out and be damned quick about it!"

He pointed to the door with a lean forefinger. His jaws tightened and his blue eyes blazed ominously.

"I'll find out about this!" cried Rathbone furiously as he reached the door. "I'll have the law on you for breach of contract!"

"Oh, no, you won't!" Jackson retorted. "You've already found out about it!" He took a step toward the enraged trader, who fumbled in a panic for the latch and darted out amid the jeers of the loungers.

"You've got to be a little rough with such fellows," Jackson remarked to Fowler. "I can see you're not used to our ways on this side of the mountains. We're mostly honest out here, but when a rogue like that fellow comes along we deal with him as he deserves."

The next morning the stars were fading in the bluest of spring skies as Jackson and Fowler completed their

preparations for the ride to Nashville. A considerable caravan was to make the journey to the new Cumberland settlement—men, women and children, setting out with high hopes and invincible courage, but with only a few tangible belongings, for the land of promise. Fowler, to whom such scenes were strange, was struck by the general good cheer. A spirit of friendliness, helpfulness and comradeship was everywhere apparent.

As Fowler clumsily tried to adjust his effects on his pack-animal Jackson deftly redistributed the impedimenta in a manner to ease the strain on the horse. The prosecutor was everywhere, suggesting, commanding, deciding upon the order in which the cavalcade was to proceed over the long, toilsome road. Fowler noted that the immigrants yielded Jackson an unquestioning obedience. A remarkable fellow, this young prosecutor, so clearly marked for leadership!

At six o'clock the caravan was under way, Jackson with six other experienced frontiersmen riding ahead, the women and children next, and behind them the pack-horses and the cattle, followed by a rear-guard as a protection against surprise. As the party set off the townspeople who had assembled to wish them Godspeed broke into a hearty cheer.

"Ride with me," said Jackson to Fowler. "You will have a chance to see what our new country looks like. We'll go ahead to inspect the trace—you'd hardly call it a road. The spring rains haven't done it any good, and by finding the bad spots we can cut round and save time. We want to make it as easy as we can for the women and children."

With his eyes playing restlessly ahead Jackson led the van. At the end of three hours he gave the signal to halt and rode back along the line, asking as to the comfort of the women, speaking cheerily to the children, dismounting to readjust the burden of a packhorse. Nothing, it seemed, escaped his vigilant eyes. He paused to pluck a violet and press it into the hand of a blue-eyed little girl.

"That's the first of the season," he said with his winning smile, "and it's a good luck sign for the journey."

Where the trail was clear he talked animatedly on a wide range of subjects. The rich soil of America had hardly been scratched, he said. Thousands and even millions of people would in time follow just such trails as this on their way to establish homes. He seemed lifted, exalted by the thought and under the vizor of his coonskin cap his blue eyes widened as if he were under the spell of some entrancing vision.

"My mother used to read to me out of the Bible," he went on, "about the Exodus and the people going on that long journey to find the land of promise. And that, it seems to me, is what we're seeing in America. All those people back of us are part of it—strong sturdy stock who are not going to fail."

"You're a native of the country—born in America?" Fowler ventured.

"Out of the Waxhaw settlement, near the Catawba, close to the boundary of the Carolinas," Jackson replied succinctly. "We knew pinching times over there. My father died two months before I was born. My mother,

sir, was a brave and noble woman"—the long hand touched his cap and he was silent for a moment. "There were three of us boys. The oldest was killed in the war and my other brother and I had some little part in it. I got a saber smash or two that I'll not forget nor forgive in a hurry." He extended his arm and drew up the sleeve of his hunting coat, disclosing the scar of an ugly wound. "There's another on my head that might have done for me; and my brother Robert got a cut in the head from the same saber."

"You don't look old enough to have been in the Revolution," remarked Fowler in a tone calculated to prolong the narrative.

"I was fifteen and Bob seventeen when things got hot in our part of the Carolinas. Every boy who could ride a horse took a hand—and we had lively times. It wasn't the redcoats we minded so much—it was the damned Tories who made the mischief. Spied on us—yes, sir, spied on their neighbors and gave aid to the invaders, the damned swine! They were fierce devils—those British troopers!—attacked women and children and needlessly burned their homes."

"They left a lot of bitterness behind," said Fowler, deeply interested and yet not wishing to appear too curious as to the history of the gaunt Carolinian.

"The day may come," Jackson said grimly, "when we'll get another chance at 'em! Bob and I got our saber cuts for refusing to clean a dragoon officer's boots. We didn't clean 'em!" he added with a grin of satisfaction. "But we went to the Camden prison pen—and a filthy hole it was—where they did their best

to starve us. You wouldn't treat a dog, sir, as we were treated, lying there in filthy sheds, Bob and I, with our wounds festering. And to add to the horror of it all we got smallpox. We would have died and rotted there only"—his hand again touched his cap—"our mother, that saint of a woman, found us and took us home. Poor Bob died—God rest his soul! And when I was up and around again—you wouldn't believe it, sir—that mother of mine got some other women and rode down to Charleston to take care of the American wounded on the prison ships in the harbor! And when that job was done she started back to the Waxhaw and died on the way. I never saw her again."

Jackson's head sank upon his breast. Fowler, deeply moved, saw a tear flash down the weather-beaten cheek.

Instantly the boy out of Waxhaw was himself again; he turned to Fowler, remarking: "Some day, in God's good time, I'll get even for all this! I'll have my chance at the British king!"

At times he rode in silence, apparently a prisoner to some dark mood. The lank young Carolinian with the scars of war upon him seemed to Fowler a curiously isolated and lonely being. He had never known a man like this Jackson, and he was puzzled by the attraction he found in him. In spite of his rough exterior, outbursts of profanity and rough-and-ready air, he was beyond question frank, genuine, unselfish and endowed with a courtesy quaint in its formality, suggesting that under his hunting-shirt he might wear the armor of some knightly ancestor. All manner of irreconcilable

elements appeared to be blended in the cavalier from the Waxhaw.

The deference paid him, even by the older men of the company, was in itself a tribute to his fine qualities and abilities. A number of them were veterans of the Revolution, inured to hardship by the long struggle for freedom. Others were hunters, of the great brotherhood of Daniel Boone, bound for the Cumberland only to plunge farther into the wilderness beyond. Jackson was all things to all men and he treated them as friends and comrades.

As they proceeded it became necessary to exercise greater precautions to guard against surprise by lurking bands of Indians, and it was Jackson who posted pickets, taking more than his own share of the duty. Often in the night he would rise from his blanket by the camp-fire for a round, to make sure the guards had not relaxed their watchfulness. A manly fellow, observant, capable, energetic, quick to see a need and ever ready to lend a hand—such was the young man from the Waxhaw as he led the company through the wilderness. He helped the drovers bring up the laggard cattle; soundly berated a young man for ill-treating a horse; sent a laugh down the line when the way was hardest and the party's spirits low.

Progress was slow owing to the necessity for accommodating the pace to the unhurried movement of the cattle, but this only promoted good fellowship in the caravan. To the children it was all a great lark. Hardy healthy youngsters from Virginia and the Carolinas, their background similar to Jackson's, they were

plagued by no memories of ease and comfort, they saw in the new world that unfolded day by day only a playground of happy adventure. The women, noting his constant concern for their comfort, his delicacy and unfailing courtesy amid all the rigors of the journey, felt secure because he rode ahead, the finest horseman in the company, with his conqueror's air! He was so kind, they said among themselves, when he took a child from a tired mother and rode with it in his arms.

One morning several boys, sent to fetch water from a spring, saw fresh deer tracks and within an hour called for aid to bring in two young bucks to add to the scant provender of the company. They made camp early, that the venison might be roasted before nightfall, to avoid advertising their presence to the Indians. Two of the hunters, making a long detour in search of Indian signs, added a bear to the stores.

As the journey was half completed a feast was spread to mark the event. The hunters, accomplished in such arts, prepared the fires in shallow trenches over which they swung the meat; the women, glad of an excuse for substituting hot ash-cake for the parched corn that had served as bread, made profligate use of their small stores of meal. In the generosity prompted by the happy course of their journey all were anxious to share some prized possession. Fowler gave coffee—a luxury unknown to most of the company; some one else added the boon of cane-sugar for sweetening; and a woman from Maryland produced a muslin sack of dried peaches as a dessert for the children. A minister who had thus far concealed his profession was moved to

offer thanks for God's merciful protection through the wilderness. The whole party stood reverently during the invocation. The meat sizzled on the spits and the pungent scent blended with the odors of the spring woodland.

"You expect to throw in your lot with us out here?" Jackson asked Fowler at the end of the feast. "It's not my way to question a stranger, but I judge you've been a man of the cities and not a farmer."

They were lying on their blankets, smoking their pipes, while the constellations throbbed above them. An intimacy surprising to both had been established between them in the few days that they had been together, but it was as to impersonal things. They had like tastes and prejudices in political matters; both believed strongly that the American republic would stand; and Jackson had, in the course of their talks, given a simple but very complete account of himself, relating all that he knew of the history of his family from its beginning in Carrickfergus, Ireland.

His frankness invited reciprocal disclosures from Fowler, who had given no slightest hint of his previous history. He was aware that this silence might waken prejudice and that it was ungracious not to reveal himself to Jackson, who had shown him many kindnesses and established himself in the eyes of the whole company as his friend.

"You are right," he said slowly. "I am town-bred and I'm taking up farming chiefly because I have no profession"—he laughed mirthlessly—"unless it be that of a soldier—though I have known some law. It would

be presumptuous for me to impose my confidences upon you. For the present I hope it will be enough if I say that for reasons of my own I want to lose myself and forget the world that once knew me.

"I have done nothing dishonorable—be assured of that," he went on quickly. "A man's life is sometimes taken out of his hands—and that's my case. When I reached Jonesboro I had no definite idea of where I was going; I simply wanted movement and change. To tell the truth, I was pretty desperate. I wanted to put that big mountain range between me and my unhappiness. Please don't take it amiss—it's rather an odd thing for one man to say to another—but as I loafed about the town back there and watched you at your work in the little log court-house, I felt greatly drawn to you. I thought I'd like to live where you lived and, more than that, it struck me that you somehow symbolized the free spirit of this new world. This may strike you as a foolish speech, but I'm perfectly sincere.

"The name I gave you is a false one which I adopted —not to cover up any crime—but merely to obliterate myself. I am an Englishman by birth and pass for a man of education. You needn't be afraid I'll get into mischief. I'll even pay my debts! So there you have me, Mr. Jackson! Whether you like it or not, I've followed you into the wilderness because I like you."

Jackson was uncertain how to take this frank avowal. He muttered an embarrassed acknowledgment under cover of the night, and after pondering a moment added:

"We seem to understand each other. I knew you

for a gentleman when I saw you in court. It was because I didn't want you to be cheated that I took a hand in choosing your horses. Don't worry about explaining yourself. I advise you never to explain anything; it's a sign of weakness, sir! Out here we take it for granted that a man's a man until we learn something to the contrary. We're all too busy on the Cumberland to pry into our neighbor's business. You won't find farming so easy but you'll learn. You'll have to rely on slave labor and we'll see what we can do about that and settling you on a good plantation. I appreciate your confidence, sir, and will respect it. If any one tries to pry into your affairs, send 'em to me!"

April welcomed them on the bluffs of the Cumberland. Shouts of delight rose from the caravan as the pilgrims looked down upon the broad-flowing river.

"There, Mr. Fowler, is the Cumberland!" exclaimed Jackson with a wave of the hand. "The most beautiful valley in the world, sir! There's everything here that a man can ask—rich soil, splendid timber and the best pasturage in the world. I'll have much to do immediately, helping to care for all these people, but the townfolk are hospitable and will see to their comfort. I have no home of my own so I can't offer you lodging. I advise you to make the best of any shelter you can find and in a few days I'll be at your service."

He explained that the visible Nashville, with half a dozen brick houses and fifty log cabins, was only the nucleus of the Cumberland settlement. In spite of the constant depredations of the Indians the indomitable pioneers had felled forests and established homes over

eighty miles of country contiguous to the river. Nashville was the trading and social center for these settlers and a refuge and rallying point in time of danger.

This was the year 1789, and far across the blue mountains George Washington, President of the United States of America, was patiently addressing himself to the business of giving direction to the course of the new republic.

CHAPTER II

RACHEL

IN THE kitchen of a big log house set high above the Cumberland a dark-eyed girl sang merrily:

"Come ride with Prince Charlie,
With bonny Prince Charlie,
Prince Charlie, whose curls are so fair!
All night he goes riding
No more he is hiding,
Our Charlie! the Prince debonair!
O, bonny Prince Charlie is riding to-night!
To horse!—and come ride with Prince Charlie!"

The rollicking measure seemingly expressed the joy she found in her work, which at the moment was the beating of eggs. The pewter fork clattered against the crock to the cadence of the song. One might have thought from her spirited singing that Bonny Prince Charlie was somewhere near at hand and likely to appear at any moment in the house of squared logs. Heavy shutters, flung open to admit the warm spring air, a rack supporting a rifle with its pendent powder-horn and bullet pouch, were part of the kitchen equipment—the familiar furnishings of pioneer homes in a day when every habitation was a fortress.

A middle-aged negro woman stirring a huge pot at

the wide fireplace turned to look with admiring eyes at the trim dark girl who sang so blithely at her task.

"All night he goes riding,
No more he is hiding,
Our Charlie! the Prince debonair!"

The negress, a slave of the household, unconsciously tapped her foot and swayed in time to the measure. The singer swung round suddenly and burst into a merry laugh.

"Sally!" she exclaimed. "Do you like that song? That's one I haven't remembered for a long time!"

"God bless you, Mis' Rachel, and dat sweet voice o' yourn! Nobody kin sing lak you do, Mis' Rachel—not widout dey got yo' love o' God in dey hea't and soul! Singin' lak you do, jus' mak religion and happiness! You's one o' de folks dat's sho made to be happy. It's mighty sight different round heah since you come home; and dat's what eve'ybody says. I guess you ain't gwine 'way no mo' from yo' mothah. She wuz grievin' fo' yo' all de time you livin' ovar dar in Kaintucky."

"I'm glad to be here, Sally," the young woman replied soberly. The light of her expressive dark eyes dimmed for a moment and her gaze turned upon the delicate blue of the sky visible through the open door.

"Dey's a powerful lot o' folks come to Nashville today—guess Mis' Donelson goin' have mo' boadahs 'n she kin keer for. Dat Mistah Ove'ton say he kin 'commodate jus' one man in his cabin. Neveh did I see so

many folks comin' out heah to live on dis Cumbe'-land Rivah!"

"More and more every year, Sally!" Rachel assented cheerfully. "You and I would get lazy if we didn't have a lot of people to cook for. Work won't hurt you and me, Sally. Stir round, now, and get the yams ready to bake. And, Sally! I want you to make corn pone in your very best style. Mr. Overton says you make the best pone in this whole country!"

"Dat man sho' enj'ys his food!" said the negress with a chuckle as she set about obeying her instructions.

Rachel, in a dress of dark blue cotton print, with a snowy handkerchief folded across her shoulders and pinned low with a brooch of heavy gold, scarcely looked her twenty-two years. The bright color in her cheeks spoke for sound health and wholesome living. Her small shapely hands bore no marks of the labor to which she was accustomed, and her wrists showed white where the long sleeves were turned up. Her rich dark hair was drawn smoothly back from a low broad forehead and neatly coiled on her neck.

The noble river and the far-stretching hills made a fitting background for Rachel Robards, the youngest of the children of Captain John Donelson. From earliest childhood she had been familiar with stories of savage ferocity and of courageous and high-hearted adventure. As a young girl she had accompanied her intrepid father on the long and perilous voyage of his boat the *Adventurer* by devious waterways—through the Holston, the Tennessee, the Ohio and the Cumberland—to reach the shore on which he had established the home

in which she was now domiciled. Death and birth were in the record of the flotilla he had piloted. Hunger and pestilence, the arrows and bullets of relentless savages had made the voyage a memorable Odyssey, unsurpassed in pioneer annals.

Rachel Donelson Robards, knowing little from books, knew well the meaning of valor and fortitude. On that cruise of the *Adventurer* she had dressed wounds, tended the sick, held a dying child in her arms —and herself but a child. Her parents had known ease and comfort in the Virginia which lay like a land of myth to the eastward of the mountains. Among their friends were the Washingtons and others of the gentry of the Old Dominion. John Donelson shared the passion of the southerners for acquiring land, pushing along the frontier to regions where the price was fixed in courage rather than coin.

Only the strong of body and soul survived in the hard conditions of this frontier. But something of the poetry and charm of the glorious panorama that had delighted her vision from earliest childhood had enriched her nature. It was she who noted the first signs of spring; knew where the cardinals made their nests, where the first bluebells nodded their lovely heads. She had lived through the American Revolution and was fully appreciative of all the steps by which her country had taken its place among the nations. And for her as for many of her generation, this was a broadening and stimulating education.

The negress had left the kitchen and Rachel had finished compounding a cake from the first wheaten

flour produced by a river mill that had anchored at Nashville, when her husband came in. Tall, dark and soldierly in his bearing, Captain Lewis Robards was a man to arrest attention. A Virginian by birth, he had in the last years of the Revolution gained his captaincy by distinguished service, and when peace was declared he had gone to Kentucky, where his family were already settled. Captain Donelson had left the Cumberland for a time to enjoy the greater security offered by Kentucky and it was there that Robards and Rachel met, and, after a short courtship were married. Captain Donelson returned to the Cumberland, where, soon after reestablishing himself, he was shot from ambush while surveying land.

Rachel had been particularly dear to him as the baby of the family and his partner on the two-thousand-mile cruise of the *Adventurer,* and he had died believing that his Rachel of the dark eyes, who had always a song on her lips and laughter in her eyes, was happily placed in life.

Robards had not set up a home of his own but lived with Rachel at his mother's in Kentucky, and it was there, in the first year after the marriage, that he first manifested an unreasoning jealousy. The atmosphere of her father's home had been marked by affection and generous kindness; all her life she had been used to admiration and the chivalrous consideration of her brothers and their friends. She was first shocked and then deeply wounded by her husband's passionate outbursts. Singularly innocent, she was astounded to find that the small courtesies to which she was accustomed

from men were given a vulgar interpretation by the man who had sworn to love and protect her.

Robards' bitterness increased to a point where, in spite of her patient attempts to win him to a better frame of mind, he declared his purpose to send her back to her mother. It was not in the Donelson blood meekly to accept such an insult, and Rachel's brother, Sam Donelson, opportunely arriving at this time, told Robards in vigorous frontier language what he thought of him and carried Rachel to her mother's home on the Cumberland.

This separation was to all appearances permanent, but Robards' mother, deeply attached to Rachel and deploring her son's conduct, asked John Overton, one of her boarders, who was about to settle in Nashville, to make overtures for a reconciliation. It was through his persuasion that Rachel consented—not without protest from her family—to renew her marital relationship, with the understanding that Robards was to take up his residence in the Cumberland country, where he had bought a soldier's preemption of land.

Rachel, hoping that a change of scene and atmosphere would exercise a salutary effect upon her violent and suspicious husband, exerted herself to restore the amity with which their married life had begun. But Robards delayed establishing an independent home, as he had promised, with the excuse that it was futile until the Indians were brought under subjection. He was morbidly sensitive as to his position in Mrs. Donelson's home, where he knew that not only Rachel's relatives but the whole community watched him with criti-

cal and disapproving eyes. His conceit was too great and his temper too unruly for him to accommodate himself to a situation due wholly to his own pettiness. Rachel was the darling of the Cumberland, and this, instead of quickening his pride, only fed the fires of his jealousy.

"What's that you're making?" he asked eying the baking pan as she bent down to thrust it into the oven.

"White flour cake," she answered cheerfully, crossing to lay her hand against his cheek. "Brother Sam brought mother some from the floating mill. This is the kind of cake you used to like, Lew, and I hope it's going to come out all right. I'm baking it for you, dear."

"I've been down to Nashville," Robards said, ignoring the caress, "and as I was leaving a large party came in from the East. I hope your mother won't take any of them in. These immigrants are fools to bring their women and children out here without coming ahead to build homes."

"Oh, that's hardly fair, Lew! All this western country is being settled in just that way, and it's only right for us to help these new people."

"They come out here without knowing how they're going to live and become a burden on the rest of us," he declared petulantly.

"I wish you wouldn't talk that way, Lew! They're not the kind of people to be a burden. There's something fine in them that makes them want to come here to live. I've heard General Sevier say that America's going to be the greatest nation in the world. And

I believe it's true. We ought to be glad we can have a part in building up the country."

"It's going to take a long time to make anything of it," muttered Robards, lounging about the room. "I'm willing to let somebody else do the rough work. If I could do what I want I'd be for going to Philadelphia or New York. There are more chances for a man in the cities than there are out here."

"Maybe there are, Lew," she replied with a little despairing sigh. "But now that we're here we ought to make the best of it. I hope you won't complain to mother because she's stretching a point to take in a few more folks than she really has room for."

"See here!" he said sharply. "You needn't lecture me about what I can't do or can do! I guess I know how to behave myself!"

"Yes, Lew, you can behave like a gentlemen when it pleases you to, and when you want to be disagreeable you can make everybody in the house uncomfortable."

"You Donelsons are all too high and mighty!" he flared.

Rachel lifted her head, her eyes flashing, to reply in kind to this ungenerous utterance when the pounding of a horse's hoofs in the road followed by a peremptory knock sent her into the long living-room to open the door. Andrew Jackson stood before her, mud-splashed as he had arrived from Jonesboro. The reddish stubble on his face added nothing to his attractiveness, but his candid, challenging eyes commanded a hearing.

"I'm Mr. Jackson," he said, removing his cap. "I

come at the instance of Mr. John Overton to ask whether Mrs. Donelson can give me board. When I came in with the immigrants to-day I gave up my room at the Townleys' to some strangers."

"You're Mr. Jackson, the prosecutor? Come in, sir, and I'll call my mother."

As she turned away Robards entered.

"My husband, Captain Robards—Mr. Jackson."

The men shook hands and Rachel went to find her mother, who was somewhere in a wing of the house where there were half a dozen sleeping-rooms.

"I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Captain Robards," said Jackson. "My business keeps me traveling a good deal and I don't keep up with the newcomers. I know Sam Donelson and Colonel Hays, your wife's brother-in-law, but I haven't met Mrs. Donelson."

"The Donelsons are quite a clan," Robards remarked indifferently. "I'm not sure I know them all myself."

"I shouldn't be troubling Mrs. Donelson," Jackson continued, "only John Overton said I could share his cabin on her place if she'd board me."

"You can probably be accommodated," Robards replied. "Food is easier to find in these parts than a good bed. Overton camps in a little cabin close to the house and two men can be comfortable there. Overton is a fine fellow; he lodged with my mother in Kentucky while he was reading law."

"Overton's a good lawyer," Jackson remarked. "When he defends where I'm prosecuting I know I've got to keep my eyes open."

The two men remained standing, appraising each other as they talked to fill in the time. Jackson, in his long absences from the settlement, had heard only vague rumors of the unhappy married life of Robards and his wife.

Rachel reappeared, followed by her mother, a white-haired woman of kindly countenance, somewhat taller than her daughter but with the same dark eyes and winning smile. Jackson sprang to place a chair for her—it was a specimen of frontier furniture made of deerskin stretched upon an oak frame held together by wooden pegs.

"I was a bit flustered when Rachel told me the prosecutor was here," said Mrs. Donelson, smiling amiably. "I didn't know but we'd been doing something to bring the law down on our heads."

"Don't be disturbed, Mrs. Donelson," said Jackson. "My call is unofficial. In fact I want to put myself under your protection! John Overton offers to let me sleep in his cabin if I may share your table. I'm giving Mr. Overton as a reference because my appearance is likely to arouse suspicions——"

With an outward gesture of his long arms Jackson confessed his consciousness that the state of his clothing was not calculated to impress favorably a woman who was reputed to be the best housekeeper on the Cumberland.

"I'm sure we've seen worse," said Mrs. Donelson.

"I can't believe it," Jackson replied. "Better-looking rogues have died on the gallows." He bowed elaborately.

Rachel, amused by the colloquy, decided that his lofty manners were second nature, expressive of sincere deference. And his honest eyes were an answer to many questions. There was a look of weariness in them; he was a tired man. Rachel saw that her mother, never indifferent to any call upon her sympathies, was strongly prejudiced in the prosecutor's favor in spite of his unprepossessing appearance.

"I've a dozen extra people coming for supper," Mrs. Donelson was saying. "It's almost more than we can take care of, but we can manage to crowd you in. There's always a way to manage."

With a glance she invited her daughter's assent. It was evidently her habit to defer to Rachel's opinion.

"I'm sure we can add one more," said Rachel.

Jackson asked the way to Overton's cabin, expressed his thanks and bowed to Mrs. Donelson, to Rachel and to Robards in turn and then, from the door, bowed to the trio inclusively.

"I didn't like to refuse him," said Mrs. Donelson as the door closed. "He's very much of a gentleman and every one speaks highly of him. Had you met him before, Lew?"

"No; I never saw him before to-day," Robards replied. "God didn't do much for him in the way of looks. They tell all sorts of stories about him—how he goes after prisoners when the sheriff can't make arrests. Now I've seen him I can understand that; he looks like a wild man."

"If he was cleaned up and shaved he'd look different," said Mrs. Donelson defensively. "Sam says he

isn't afraid of man or devil, but he seems very gentle. He's bought land and expects to make Nashville his home."

"I can't see that he'd add much," Robards retorted.

Rachel left to supervise the preparation of supper for the unusual number of guests. She had learned by bitter experience to have a care in praising any man, knowing that the most casual and innocent word of approval would instantly arouse jealous suspicions in her husband's mind. Now that Robards had returned to her she was bent upon living with him happily. She still had her dreams—exalted ideals of the married life—this Rachel who was "beautiful and well favored" like that other Rachel, the daughter of Laban for whom Jacob served seven—and "yet seven other years" in the long ago.

CHAPTER III

STARS OF PROMISE

WHEN Overton reached his cabin, a short distance from the Donelson house, he found Jackson furiously engaged in bathing himself in a wash-tub.

"Took you at your word, John—so here I am!" Jackson spluttered. "Too tired to go down to the river to swim, so seeing the tub I bribed one of Mrs. Donelson's darkies to lug me up water from the spring. Hope I'm not going to be in your way!"

"Not if you behave yourself," Overton replied amiably, tossed his three-cornered hat on to the bed in the corner. "So Mrs. Donelson's taken you in?"

"Yes. And a mighty fine woman she is! She was so kind I thought I'd clean up to show I appreciated her hospitality."

"You probably saw Mrs. Robards, too, and that accounts for some of this appreciation!" Overton returned ironically as Jackson, having dried his person by vigorous application of a coarse huckaback towel, dug clean linen out of his saddle-bags and proceeded to dress.

The vigor with which he was making his toilet amused Overton—a short, rather slight young man whose distinguishing features were a pair of keen gray eyes and a humorous ironic mouth. He lighted his pipe and smoked placidly as he talked.

"I'll give you warning right now," he remarked, "to be careful of Captain Robards and his Rachel. You can't pass her the sugar without getting a black look from the captain."

"He seems a very decent fellow," said Jackson, who had begun to shave before a scrap of mirror stuck in a crevice in the wall. "What's this story about trouble between him and his wife? They look happy enough."

"I hope they're getting on better," Overton replied. "I boarded with the captain's mother in Kentucky and had to know of their troubles whether I wanted to or not. He's insanely jealous and under his attractive exterior he's about the meanest devil I ever knew. You'll probably hear in the course of time about the big row he made over a young man named Short who boarded at Lew's mother's. Lew got it into his head that Rachel was greatly taken with Short, who's a clean manly fellow, and he wasn't any more interested in Rachel than I was or any other man would be who knows a pretty girl when he sees her. Robards raised all kinds of hell, and made everybody in the community uncomfortable. I'll say for Lew's mother that she stood up for Rachel and did her best to make Lew see what a fool he was.

"I liked them all and was sorry to see things going so badly. Lew's mother asked me to help straighten things out, but he's as unreasonable as a wildcat and I couldn't do anything with him. One day he got mad about something and sent for Sam Donelson to come and get Rachel and take her home to her mother. By the time Sam got to Kentucky Lew had changed his

mind, but the Donelson blood was up and Sam wouldn't leave his sister there to be insulted. Of all the damned scoundrelly things I ever heard of, that's the worst—sending his wife home as if she were a defective chattel!"

"He needs a good lickin'," mumbled Jackson, engaged at the moment in removing the stubble from his upper lip. "There ought to be strong laws with a real bite to 'em to punish men who mistreat women."

"When they're young and handsome the laws should be all the stronger," remarked Overton pithily.

Jackson flung round quickly.

"No, sir!" he cried hotly. "A woman is a woman, young or old, beautiful or ugly, and any decent man will stand up for her! There was a dirty hound out at Haysborough who had a habit of getting drunk and beating his wife—a weak, sickly little creature with four young children. Some of the folks out there wanted to file an affidavit against him, but it struck me locking him up in jail wouldn't do any good, and he needed the time for his farm; so I rode over and gave him a talking to, and then—for fear he didn't understand the words—I gave him a hell of a lickin'. There are cases, Overton, that the law doesn't touch! And nothing convinces a man he's made a mistake like a sound thrashin'!"

With this terse deliverance the young prosecutor calmly resumed his shaving.

"You're a fine officer of the law! You ought to be the public executioner!" exclaimed Overton. "But," he went on seriously, "you'd best be careful of your

conduct toward Mrs. Lewis Robards. The situation is full of danger—and of course you can't punch Robards' head without making trouble for his wife. And, for another thing, Robards is a powerful brute; if you tried to lick him you'd be likely to get the worst of it."

"Why are you so damned solemn about this business?" demanded Jackson irascibly. "You talk as if I had no better business than starting trouble with married women!"

"Oh, I don't mean that! There are a dozen girls between here and the Smokies that would jump at the chance of getting you."

"You're plumb crazy! I'm too busy to get married!" replied Jackson, closing his razor case with a snap. "But there's one thing I can tell you, John Overton—I'm certainly not going to get mixed up with some other man's wife!"

"That's the last thing I'd expect of you, Andy. You're the decentest man I know. I just wanted to tell you about this situation. You know that high-handed way of yours is just what a woman likes and what a fellow like Robards would resent. You know you've got a God-Almighty way about you."

Jackson chuckled. "If I have, it comes in handy sometimes, John. But you know mighty well I don't mean to trample on anybody."

"That's the truth, Andy—I know it well. You're a fine fellow and a gentleman!" Overton, who had been idling about the room, laid his hand affectionately on Jackson's shoulder. "There's the supper horn; we mustn't be late."

When they reached Mrs. Donelson's they found the guests assembled. Mrs. Donelson indicated Jackson's seat directly opposite Robards' and took her own place at the head of the table. She had changed the simple linsey-woolsey gown in which Jackson had first seen her for one of heavy black silk with a white linen ruffle at the throat. A graceful cap partly covered her abundant, beautiful white hair. A stately figure she made, the lady of the manor, mistress of slaves, of herds and fields, and not to be mistaken for a boarding-house keeper! She glanced along the table at the faces disclosed in the candlelight—the bearded countenances of rough frontiersmen, the travel-worn faces of their women—and bowed her head. A hush fell upon the company as she spoke a heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving. The simple words, devoutly uttered, touched a chord of memory in Jackson's heart.

In the little cabin on the Waxhaw, it had been the invariable habit of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, no matter how meager the fare she was able to offer her boys, to observe the rite of grace before meat; and amid all the buffetings, strifes and struggles that had already marked his course, Andrew was always profoundly moved by any incident that recalled the mother he revered.

The company fell hungrily upon the food, which was served under Rachel's direction by two negroes. Those who were making their first acquaintance with Mrs. Donelson's establishment were satisfied that her reputation for setting the best table on the Cumberland was well deserved. There were stewed beef with dumplings,

roast wild turkey with stuffing, spring greens cooked with ham, hominy and Sally's perfect ash-cake. For dessert there was Mrs. Donelson's own special version of Indian pudding, with particles of dried fruits added to the usual ingredients of corn meal and molasses. Sweet milk and buttermilk, coffee and tea in abundance were the beverages. There was enough and to spare of everything, and it seemed to the newcomers that they had indeed come into a land of plenty.

When the first assault upon the platters had quieted the pangs of hunger there was leisure for talk; and the meal proceeded to the accompaniment of a lively exchange of experiences chiefly in a key of humorous exaggeration peculiar to the western pioneer. In the long periods of loneliness, when he was shut in by the wilderness and without social contacts, the frontiersman was storing away material against an opportunity for relating his experiences—a brush with the Indians, a battle with white outlaws, or the slaying of a wolf after a long chase and a fierce battle.

It was the racy talk of courageous, hardy men, some of whom had known a very different order of life before they were captivated by the romance of the new world beyond the mountains. The women rarely spoke, but most of the men talked freely. Captain Robards was one of the exceptions. He ate in stolid silence, responding in monosyllables when Jackson addressed him directly.

At Jackson's left were two little girls of a family that had that day fled to Nashville from their home ten miles up the river to escape the Indians who had

killed settlers at several near-by "stations," as the fortified plantation homes were called. The fear in which they had been rushed to a place of safety was still in their eyes. The long table lined with strange faces and the incessant talk had awed them into silence. A tall hunter had recounted his escape from savages in the Illinois country—a story enlivened with much vivid detail—when Jackson noted that the constant reference to the perils of the wilderness was adding to the discomfiture and unhappiness of the children.

Ignoring the rest of the company, he began telling the children a story about a pony he had owned as a boy on the Waxhaw. He had trained it to do all manner of tricks and to come running when he whistled for it. The pony having diverted them, he described a hound he had owned, which was on the best of terms with the pony, and the good times they had hunting deer and foxes. When a British soldier came along and stole the pony to replace the mount he had lost, the hound disappeared, but weeks afterward pony and hound returned together.

The faces of the children brightened at this happy ending of the little tale, and Jackson went on with stories of his childhood and youth, the field school and the academy he had attended, winding up with an account of a visit to Charleston, where he saw ships from the big ocean and talked with sailors who had been in every part of the world. The rest of the company took the hint and the telling of stories of peril and violence was abandoned.

The slender Carolinian with his reddish hair and

blue eyes continued, telling more stories of his boyhood, quite unconscious that the adults were now listening. There was something magnetic about the hard-working young prosecutor who fought cocks, raced horses, drank whisky, swore and punched heads, and yet had the manners of a courtier and the heart to make himself charming to children!

Robards was aware that Jackson commanded attention—even Rachel's attention, at her place far down the table. Her rapt look irritated him, and he corrected a statement Jackson had made as to the quickest passage ever made by a ship between England and an American port. The matter was not important; Jackson had spoken of ships merely to entertain and distract the children, but he not only accepted the correction amiably but drew from Robards an interesting account of a privateersman on which he had served for a time during the Revolution. Overton was surprised and relieved that Jackson was getting on so well with Robards.

Mrs. Donelson and Rachel retired to show the women and children to their sleeping quarters, while the men remained to smoke. The hour provided an opportunity for the newcomers to take counsel of the rest as to farm methods, fair prices for horses and cattle and the marketing of their products. In the course of the discussion a sale was made of a section of land, and Jackson was engaged to prepare the papers for the transaction the next morning. Land was cheap —all but free—but already titles were provocative of trouble and boundaries were a source of strife even

among owners whose tracts were larger than they had the labor to clear and cultivate.

The talk drifted into politics and affairs at the seat of government in Philadelphia. All the pioneers asked of the national government was protection from Indian depredations and from invasion by the French and Spaniards on the Gulf. Jackson became interested, aroused; he rose and moved restlessly about the room as his imagination kindled.

"When we drive Spain out of the Floridas we can handle the Indians easy enough. They slaughter American settlers with Spanish muskets!"

"In the older states," some one remarked, "the people are tired of war—they wore themselves out fighting the British. They have no interest in our troubles out here."

"For that matter, the British haven't yet gone!" Jackson exclaimed. "They've still got a string of forts on the northern border. This country's too rich a plum for Europe to drop without a struggle. We've got to have a strong government and the means to strike and strike hard whenever Europe shows her claws. It's a long way to Philadelphia and until we're satisfied the government's going to take care of us out here we've got to maintain a militia organized and equipped to strike in any direction. The air in these parts isn't good for kings or lovers of kings. By God, if the British want to try it again we'll give 'em some more of what they got at King's Mountain!"

"The same dose would be good for the Dons, wouldn't it, Andy?" asked Overton, who had never ad-

mired Jackson so much as when the prosecutor declared war upon all the potential enemies of his country.

"No, sir!" cried Jackson sternly. "I wouldn't *shoot* the Spaniards! I'd boil 'em! Boil 'em and ship 'em home to their filthy king!"

This was greeted with a roar of laughter that expressed the hearty approval of the prosecutor's auditors. Jackson was a fellow to their liking. Even the late arrivals in the district knew him for a fighter. One of the company was so stirred by Jackson's patriotic ardor that he produced a jug of rum. A negro boy who had been clearing the table was dispatched to the spring for water; pewter mugs were seized with avidity and the liquor was dispensed in generous measure.

"To America's president and death to all kings!" proposed Overton.

With a cheer the company stood to drink the toast.

"To Washington—and all the presidents to follow him!" cried Sam Donelson, who entered at the moment.

With a clatter of chairs they were all again on their feet. Aroused by the unusual disturbance Mrs. Donelson appeared at the door and all the company turned toward her.

"To the American woman—the noblest in the world!" Jackson proposed instantly.

"Thank you, gentlemen! What would you expect of the mothers and wives and sisters of American noblemen!" And with a deep curtsy, she left them.

In the general good fellowship Robards relaxed and talked freely and with point, particularly with reference to the organization of the militia for the defense of

the district. Jackson was further gratified to find that on the subject of horses and fighting-cocks Robards showed admirable intelligence.

The hour grew late and the jug was empty. Jackson was enjoying himself so hugely that he was reluctant to leave, and it was only when Overton reminded him that he had a hard day's work planned for the morrow that they followed the path to the cabin. Jackson, more stimulated by the talk than by the drink he had imbibed, was reluctant to go to bed, and as Overton undressed he recurred to the men at the big house—praising some of them and indulging in friendly speculation as to the merits of others.

"We're getting a fine lot of people out here, Overton!—strong characters—the kind we need to lay the foundations of the state we're going to have here one of these days. By the way!" he ran on, though Overton had tumbled into bed and turned his face to the wall as a hint that he was averse to further conversation, "by the way, you're wrong about Robards! You gave me the idea that he isn't much better than a skunk. But I can't see anything wrong with him! A man with a wife like Mrs. Robards *ought* to be jealous! After all, a man's wife is his wife! And it's his business to stand up for her and protect her. And Mrs. Robards is certainly a sightly girl—beautiful as a spring morning."

Overton sat up suddenly and shook his fist warningly.

"There you go! I want you to remember what I said to you. Robards is a barrel of gunpowder and doesn't need a stroke of lightning to blow him up! He

had on his good manners to-night but don't be deceived by that! You'd better listen to me, Andrew Jackson!"

"Bah! You talk like an old woman!" Jackson retorted. "Don't waste time worrying about me."

"Go to bed!" shouted Overton, and with a raucous imitation of a snore he dug his face into his pillow and ended the debate.

As Jackson stretched his long legs on the corn-husk mattress between the clean, rough linen sheets, he felt singularly at ease with himself and all the world. Through the small window cut in the logs he saw a great phalanx of stars marching through the heavens; the soft wind of the southern spring rustled the young leaves of an oak whose boughs stretched over the little cabin protectingly. Not since his boyhood had he been so happy as to-night. He drowsily resisted sleep in the sheer delight of his thoughts as he contemplated the square of stars flung across the sky like a banner radiant with promise for the future.

CHAPTER IV

SHADOWS

JACKSON, busy though he was with his growing private practise and the duties of the prosecutor's office, nevertheless found time to assist Fowler, who was inspecting land with a view to establishing himself as a permanent resident of the Cumberland country. The newcomer proved to be far more capable than Jackson had imagined him to be. His intelligence, adaptability and physical vigor more than balanced his inexperience in all that pertained to pioneer life. Jackson, who spoke with authority on land values, spent many days riding with him over the country, looking for a tract that offered the rich soil, water and drainage essential to a good plantation.

While Fowler at no time gave any clue to his past, his casual reference to places he had visited in Europe and now and then the use, of which he was apparently unconscious, of legal phraseology strengthened Jackson's impression that his friend had enjoyed unusual advantages and opportunities.

They finally decided upon a section of land east of Nashville which had been partly cleared by a settler who, in the not uncommon fashion of the pioneers, wished to take the profit of his labor and make another beginning. Fowler was particularly attracted by the

site of the large and comfortable cabin perched on an eminence affording a fine view of the valley. Certain alterations in the house and the building of slave quarters and stables were necessary, and while the work was in progress he continued to lodge at Nashville.

Jackson's office—a cabin on the main street of the village—was a place where, according to Overton, the prosecutor went merely to be interrupted. Fowler was vastly entertained by the discussions, not even remotely related to jurisprudence, that were carried on in the office by the astonishing characters who loafed there.

On a night which Jackson had set apart to draw indictments returned by the grand jury, Fowler stepped in to find a cocking main in progress and Jackson on his knees cheering on the rooster he was backing. When—after a long and gory battle—the decision went to Jackson with the stake (a gallon of rum), he ordered the room cleared under threat of prosecution if they interfered further with his work. However, the jug was emptied before they dispersed and Jackson and Fowler were left alone, waiting while a negro boy removed the evidences of conflict.

"I guess Bill McPherson knows more about chickens than he did," remarked Jackson as he began turning over the books and papers on the long rough table that served him as a desk. "I told Judge McNairy I'd have the indictments ready in the morning and I've got to go to work."

"I can do some of these for you," said Fowler quietly. "Give me your memoranda for a few of the cases; I think I know the form."

Jackson, again the lawyer and the prosecutor of the district, met Fowler's friendly gaze inquiringly.

"You're familiar with legal forms?" he asked.

"Oh, every one should know something of such things," Fowler replied carelessly.

Without further discussion Jackson tossed him a bundle of papers and Fowler cleared a space and fell to work. The candle flames swayed gently in the cool night air as the two men industriously plied their quills. Fowler, asking a question now and then, offered his first indictment for Jackson's criticism. The prosecutor exclaimed with pleasure at his assistant's smooth-flowing chirography and read the document through with nods of approval. It was couched in language more formal than the phraseology to which Jackson was accustomed and he chuckled as he passed it back.

"The worshipful judge will do some blinking when he sees this. He thinks he's a better lawyer than I am and I've never been able to convince him that he isn't—but this indictment will give him a headache! If you don't mind I'll just use some of your phrases in mine. They make horse stealing and assault and battery sound worse than murder!"

Their work finished, they lingered, smoking their pipes and talking fitfully, in the fashion of men who are at ease with each other, until midnight.

"I'll be glad to escape from the tavern and settle in my own house," observed Fowler. "It's a fine place you chose for me."

"Oh, by the way," said Jackson, gathering up the

finished indictments, "Colonel Hays is willing to sell you that quarter-section adjoining your parcel—you ought to have it. We'll ride out to-morrow afternoon and close the matter. Hays married one of the Donelson girls—fine folks—you ought to know 'em."

It was early in the afternoon when they reached Colonel Hays' "station," and as the description of the land had to be worked out from a surveyor's notes the matter occupied the men for some time. The necessary papers were prepared under the trees in front of the house, and they refreshed themselves with the colonel's excellent whisky to mark the end of the transaction. They were discussing crop prospects when Mrs. Hays came out to say that she expected the gentlemen to remain for supper.

"Mr. Overton was here yesterday," Mrs. Hays remarked to Jackson, "and told us you are staying at my mother's."

"Yes; and it's a privilege—a mighty big privilege—to be allowed to sit at her table," replied Jackson. "I'm away so much that we haven't got very well acquainted yet, but I can see that she's likely to spoil Overton and me by her kindnesses."

"Oh, mother has a way of doing that! General Sevier calls her the mother of the Cumberland. She just has to be doing things for people!"

Hays wanted Jackson's opinion of a colt which he thought gave promise of developing speed and this resulted in an inspection of all the live stock.

They were returning from the barn-lot when the furious pounding of hoofs in the road brought them to

attention. The rider, discerned through the trees, was a woman, who turned in at the gate without checking her horse's pace. These were times when every settler was constantly on the lookout for refugees fleeing from hostile Indians, and Hays rushed toward the house, shouting to a negro to sound the horn to call the laborers from the fields. Jackson and Fowler sprang for their rifles; the heavy shutters slammed over the windows of the big sprawling cabin, pickaninnies scuttled for the slave quarters, as Hays began the usual routine preparations for defense when a home was threatened.

"It's Mrs. Robards!" cried Jackson, running forward to lift the rider from her sweating, panting horse.

"Did I frighten you all?" she asked. "I just rode over to see sister Jane and the children."

Though she smiled upon the two men it was evident that her flight had been impelled by some occurrence that had profoundly shaken her. Her eyes bore traces of recent tears; her hair had tumbled about her shoulders and her riding skirt had been torn by brambles. Hays came out and, finding that she was not a messenger bearing tidings of an Indian uprising, he scolded her for her venturesomeness. But she was already upon the veranda where her sister took her in her arms, Rachel weeping afresh, and they disappeared into the house.

The men, mystified, put down their arms, and the negroes who had rushed in from their fields were dismissed.

"I wouldn't have had her do that for a mile-square of land," Hays declared. He explained to Fowler that

small parties of Indians sometimes lay in wait for days in the heavy cane-growths that lined the roads for a chance to pounce upon travelers.

"Mrs. Robards is the daughter of her father," remarked Jackson defensively, and when Hays, summoned by his wife, left them he told Fowler the story of the voyage of the *Adventurer*.

When Hays reappeared he seemed greatly perturbed.

"It's a nasty business," he said in reply to the questioning look of the men. "Things have come to a pretty pass when a fine girl like Rachel Donelson has to run from a whelp like Lew Robards!"

Jackson scowled and cut the air savagely with a switch he had picked up in his walk. At the Donelson house, in the presence of the boarders who gathered there, Robards treated his wife with at least an outward courtesy, and Jackson had been convinced that Overton had exaggerated the seriousness of the trouble between Rachel and her husband; but her mad ride to her sister's house and the emotional stress under which she was still laboring at the end of the journey confirmed all that Overton had said as to the unhappy affairs of the young couple.

Jackson's chivalry was touched at all times by a slight or an injury suffered by any woman; and his blood boiled at the thought of Rachel—kind, generous and mirth-loving as he knew her to be—driven into the wilderness by the brutality of an unappreciative husband.

Supper was served under the trees, and Rachel, soothed and comforted by her sister, was quite herself

again. With a young nephew on one side and an adoring niece on the other she seemed to Jackson the embodiment of happy youth. Her eyes had regained their wonted brightness and her laugh rang out merrily at the quips of the children.

She had not met Fowler before, but she listened with intelligent interest to his plans for developing his plantation. She had, Jackson reflected, the dignity and graciousness so marked in her mother. When the meal was ended the children insisted that Aunt Rachel sing for them.

"But I only know old songs and you've heard all of them a hundred times," she protested.

"It's the old songs we want, Aunt Rachel!" they cried in unison.

"But these gentlemen don't want to hear old songs; they want to talk!"

The gentlemen declared that nothing would please them better than to hear the songs.

Jackson and Fowler had intended leaving immediately after supper but they smoked their pipes and lingered, reluctant to leave when Rachel made so pleasing a picture as she sat with the little girl's head against her knee and one hand resting on the lad's shoulder. She sang as if quite oblivious of the rest of the company. Somewhere in a thicket a thrush sang its vesper song. Jackson met Fowler's gaze with a look of understanding. It had occurred to both that this daughter of the wilderness sang as birds sing—for pure joy in the singing. Her songs were fragments of English and Scotch ballads that she had learned in her

childhood home in Virginia. Now and then Fowler added his deep bass where he recalled the words. The shadows lengthened and Rachel pointed suddenly to the first star, bade the children say their good nights and accompanied them into the house.

It was evidently her purpose to spend the night, and remembering that she must have much to say to her sister, Jackson rose.

"We must be on the march, Fowler. If you'll send for our horses, Colonel Hays——"

They were all standing, Jackson and Fowler in the act of thanking Mrs. Hays for her hospitality, when a horseman, his approach unnoticed, appeared somberly out of the shadows in the lane.

"It's Lew!" exclaimed Mrs. Hays in consternation. "What shall we do, Robert?"

Hays took a step forward and stopped, awaiting Robards, who had flung himself from his horse and was walking slowly toward them.

"Oh, you're giving a party, eh?" Robards remarked sneeringly. "And our dashing young prosecutor is here," he added insolently, and turned his back on Jackson and Fowler. "Where's Rachel? I've come to take her home!"

"Rachel is in the house with the children," Hays answered. "I'm not sure that she wants to go home."

"I said, Colonel Hays, that I came to take my wife home!" Robards retorted angrily.

Rachel was already crossing the veranda, and Robards went to meet her. They talked in low tones for a moment while Hays, his arms folded, watched

them through the deepening twilight. Then Robards walked to his horse and Rachel vanished into the house. Mrs. Hays hurried after her and they reappeared immediately, Rachel wearing the riding habit she had exchanged for a dress of her sister's. Mrs. Hays sent a negro for Rachel's horse and the two women walked out on the lawn where Jackson and Fowler had remained.

"Good night, Mr. Jackson; good night, Mr. Fowler —and thank you, Robert." Rachel was calm; spoke unhurriedly; caught her sister's hands and kissed her without betraying emotion. "Tell the children, Jane, that I'm sorry not to see them in the morning—but you must bring them over to mother's soon."

"The scoundrel!" blurted Hays as the retreating figures blurred and merged in the darkness. "I'm sorry you gentlemen had to see this, but everybody on the Cumberland knows about their troubles. Overton's probably told you what he knows, Jackson?"

"Yes; but things seemed to have been going more smoothly," Jackson replied. "If I'd been Mrs. Robards I certainly wouldn't have gone back with him."

"You're wrong about that; she did exactly right," said Mrs. Hays gently. "She's had a great deal of trouble with him and he has not scrupled to try to blacken her character. He seems bent upon injuring her and he's humiliated her over and over again. We were all of us against her taking him back, but mother decided that it would be better for them to live together for a time at least to give him one more chance to be decent. We want to protect Rachel, but the whole thing

is becoming intolerable. It's for mother and Rachel to decide now what course to take."

"I for one would like to kill the scoundrel," cried Hays. "Why—what was all the fuss about this morning? Nothing! Mrs. Donelson sent Rachel over to the Torrences' with food and linen for Mrs. Torrence, who is sick and likely to die, and when Rachel came back young Jim Torrence rode along with her for company and protection. And Lew was furious about it! A mere boy, Jim Torrence! My God, you'd think Robards insane."

"Rachel's borne about all she's going to take," said Mrs. Hays determinedly.

"All we'll let her take!" declared Hays.

When Jackson reached Mrs. Donelson's he found Overton still up, with the pretense that he had spent the evening working over some law cases; but Jackson, suspecting that his friend was disturbed by the latest turn in the affairs of the Robards, demanded to know whether the young couple had reached home safely.

"Yes; they got back about an hour ago," Overton replied. "They had a clash, so her mother told me, and she flew away in a high state of indignation to her sister's. Then Lew rode over and brought her home. Mrs. Donelson was greatly worried about Rachel and I stayed at the house with her till they came home. I judge the ride hadn't been a happy one. You were at the Hays'—I got that from something Robards said."

"Yes; Fowler and I were closing a trade with Hays

and stayed for supper. We were there when Rachel came riding in as if the Indians were after her. We were still there when Robards came. From what I could gather he'd had another spasm of jealousy."

"Yes, the beast! And from the tone in which he mentioned the fact you were there I judge he suspected *that* was prearranged."

"That was it, was it! Well, damn him for a dirty hound! He turned his back on me in an insolent manner, but I could see he was in a rage and I took no notice of it. Thought she'd ridden to her sister's to meet me! Well, by God, he'll not say that very loud! There wasn't a chance in a million that I'd be there! Nobody but Fowler knew I was going to see Hays today."

"Calm yourself, Andy," Overton admonished. "You've got to remember you're not dealing with a sane man. I suppose he was mad to find Rachel at her sister's enjoying herself without him after he'd practically driven her from her mother's house by his abuse. He was surly enough even after the long ride home. The Donelsons ought to get rid of him at once. I give him up; he's hopeless!"

"I never saw his equal," declared Jackson. "But his wife's certainly a girl of spirit. When she got to the Hays' she looked as if she'd cried all the way, but she pulled herself together and sat at the table like a queen. Then that scoundrel came in like a slave-hunter and ordered her home. You gave her the wrong advice, John Overton, in telling her to try to live with him in the hope he'd change his ways. There's an ugly devil

inside of that fellow and he can no more change his ways than a wildcat."

"Well, it's none of your affair and you keep out of it! I've exhausted my powers of diplomacy, and violence would only add fuel to the fire. Robards doesn't like living here and wants to take Rachel back to Kentucky, but the Donelsons will never allow that."

"I should hope not!" cried Jackson, pacing the floor in his agitation.

"For God's sake be careful how you meet him—and Rachel too! Now that he's got this madman's idea that Rachel went to her sister's to see you, the mole-hill is likely to grow into a mountain—for that's his way."

"I've no intention of thrusting myself into the affair. Of course I'll be careful—for her sake," Jackson assented quietly.

Outwardly at least, matters now went on more smoothly. The watchful Overton noted with approval that the prosecutor was conducting himself with admirable circumspection when he appeared at the Donelson table, avoiding direct speech with Rachel and carefully concealing any animosity he felt toward her husband. Not by look or word did he even remotely refer to the fact that he had been spectator of the captain's churlish conduct at the Hays' plantation. Overton was relieved. Nothing could be more unfortunate than for his hot-headed friend to fall under the spell of Rachel Robards' charms.

His contempt for Robards increased as he reflected upon the man's stupidity in not seeing that his conduct must inevitably cause Rachel to contrast him with

other men—and not unnaturally with the chivalrous young prosecutor. He was relieved that Jackson no longer lingered for the after-supper talk at the Donelsons' but spent his evenings at his cabin office in the village. All was going well and Jackson's docility moved Overton to the reflection that a hopeless love for a woman he could never marry was a desirable situation for Jackson if the effect was to curb his fighting spirit.

Jackson's liking for Mrs. Donelson had grown into a warm affection, and her reciprocal regard for him, which found practical expression in the care of his clothing and solicitude for his health, caused Overton to remark ironically that the prosecutor was the pet boarder, and the only one she saw from her place at the head of the table. No one understood, when Jackson contributed provisions to the Donelson larder or made the kindly woman a gift of glass or crockery from the stock of some venturesome trader, that he was following an established principle of a stern, self-made creed by repaying to other women the debt he owed to the mother lying somewhere in an unmarked grave, who wore in his eyes the halo of sainthood.

CHAPTER V

THE CAVALIER IN LOVE

A MONTH had passed when one afternoon Jackson met Robards in the Nashville Tavern. Jackson saluted courteously, in the manner of the day, and was passing on when Robards stopped him. The man, obviously somewhat under the influence of drink, eyed Jackson contemptuously.

"You were present, sir," Robards began, "at Colonel Hays' plantation not long ago when I called there. My errand was a painful one, and your presence was an impertinence. I consider you, sir, a prying, meddlesome busybody!"

Jackson straightened himself and met Robards' gaze steadily.

"A gentleman, sir, sees nothing it isn't proper for him to see," Jackson replied deliberately. "I hope that is satisfactory, sir."

Robards, unprepared for this rejoinder, blinked as his befuddled consciousness got the import of the words.

"It's just as well for you, Mr. Jackson, that you didn't see anything. Any man that interferes in my affairs is bound to come to grief."

"You flatter yourself, Captain Robards! I'm not interested in your affairs and even less interested in you. Good day, sir."

As he reached the street Jackson met Overton who, seeing the tense look in his friend's face, demanded to know what was the matter.

"Matter enough!" exclaimed Jackson wrathfully. "Robards is in there, and he tried to pick a quarrel with me. If he hadn't been drunk I'd have broken his neck! I hope you'll give me credit for that, John Overton!"

"It's not becoming in a prosecutor to fight; you've got to set a good example to the citizens," said Overton mildly. "Fowler has been looking for you. He wants us both to go out to his place for supper. He's waiting in your office now. The ride out there will calm your feelings. By the way—what do you know about Fowler?" Overton asked as they started up the street.

"Nothing!" exclaimed Jackson impatiently. "Isn't it enough that he's a gentleman and pays his bills?"

"Why of course, Andy," assented Overton, who often found it convenient to acquiesce in Jackson's utterances, even when they were ill-considered or rash, to avoid argument. He had asked about Fowler merely to change the current of Jackson's thoughts, and he grinned at his lack of success.

The meeting with Robards had left the prosecutor in an ugly humor, but Overton was relieved that Jackson had restrained himself. They joined Fowler and started at once for his plantation. The narrow trace permitted only two to ride together and taking advantage of this Jackson rode ahead, leaving his companions to themselves.

Overton knew that Jackson was thinking of Robards

—and thinking of Rachel!—and Overton did not want his friend to think of Rachel Robards. It had been evident to him for some time that the feeling aroused in Jackson by Robards' conduct at the Hays' was not merely that of a gentleman obliged to witness the boorish treatment of a woman, but of a man in whose passionate heart love had already begun to work its bewildering and irresistible magic.

The inspection of the improvements in progress on Fowler's estate restored Jackson's amiability. Both Jackson and Overton were astonished at the rapidity with which Fowler had effected radical changes in the house. It was evident that here was a man endowed with an unusual capacity for getting things done. He had extended the lines of the log house, reconstructed the sitting-room, and rebuilt the chimney and fireplace on a large scale. One of the slaves Jackson had bought for him was an expert carpenter who was busy fitting shelves into three sides of the room.

"Good God!" exclaimed Jackson. "Are you going to keep a store, Fowler."

"No. As soon as I get time to go down to New Orleans I've got some books and other stuff I'm going to bring up here."

"If the Indians clean you out they'll enjoy the books," remarked Overton dryly.

They passed on to the slave quarters and stables—the latter evoking an exclamation of surprise from Jackson.

"You can't put any cheap stock in a place like this. Jim Hargitt, over on Stone's River, has a Virginia mare

that will look well in these quarters and I'll trade him a six-forty of land for her and give her to you."

"Don't refuse it," said Overton when Fowler began to expostulate. "Jackson's always making presents; it's one of his weaknesses and the land didn't cost him a farthing. He got it for winning an easy lawsuit."

They returned to the house in good spirits, which were stimulated somewhat by a drink which Fowler compounded of West Indian rum, spices and other ingredients whose nature he refused to disclose.

"I suppose you'll be glad," remarked Overton as they sat down to supper in the half-finished living-room, "when your womenfolks get here."

"Ah, there'll be no womenfolks here—except the slave women," Fowler replied with a slight smile. "You gentlemen probably think me selfish and not a true pioneer to be setting up such an establishment just for myself. But I expect to spend the remaining years of my life here. In fact, gentlemen, you see me at home!"

"When I set up housekeeping I hope to have a wife to share it," said Jackson. "I'm getting tired of knocking about—sleeping in the woods and eating with horses."

"I'm in the same fix, Andy," said Overton. "We bachelors have freedom—but that's all we have."

"That's the popular view," Fowler remarked carelessly.

Jackson, deeply preoccupied for a moment, frowned and struck the table savagely with his fist. The reference to the felicity of married life had flung his thoughts back to Robards and he gave Fowler a succinct account of the meeting at the tavern.

"Contemptible hound!" Fowler ejaculated. "I never knew anything quite as base as that fellow's conduct. But to charge you, Jackson, with going out there to meet his wife is certainly a flight of the imagination. He'll be charging you next with writing his wife love-letters and posting them in birds' nests!"

"Rachel's had about enough of him," said Overton. "Sooner or later she will end it."

"The pity is she ever married the cur. He's debased her; ruined her life!" Jackson ejaculated bitterly.

"What Captain Robards overlooks," remarked Fowler, "is that his wife, being a very attractive young woman, may wake up to the fact that he's not the only man in the world. There's a point, you know, gentlemen, where the noblest loyalty will break."

"You are right," said Overton. "The fool doesn't see what he's inviting—what he's going to lose."

"What our fool does see, though," said Fowler, "and what our fool probably does know, is that his wife no longer loves him."

Jackson, who had been staring at the wall, roused from his revery and poured himself a drink.

"Do you believe that—is that true?" he demanded.

"Yes; I'd say so," replied Fowler gravely, "from the facts you give me. It's possible she never really loved him. She was young and propinquity has a lot to do with marriage. But there's something splendid in the way she's carrying herself."

Jackson moodily refilled his pipe. Overton turned to Fowler and each read in the other's eyes an acknowledgment that with Jackson the mischief was already done; he was in love with Rachel Robards.

CHAPTER VI

RACHEL LEAVES NASHVILLE

AS THE year wore on Overton was aware of a change in Jackson. Though the prosecutor was still nominally one of Mrs. Donelson's boarders and continued to share Overton's cabin, he offered ingenuous excuses for absenting himself from Nashville for weeks at a time. He led a small expedition against a band of Indians that had been harassing the outlying settlements, not waiting for the militia to be mobilized. Several members of the company were killed and a flying tomahawk nicked Jackson's shoulder. He made light of his narrow escape and swore impatiently when Overton rebuked him for his foolhardiness.

The episode, however, added to Jackson's popularity. It was not his way to wait for troops to be ordered out when a "station" was attacked, a settler killed or women and children dragged into captivity! Wherever men met in the great valley the prosecutor was praised, and it meant something to be conspicuous for courage in a time and place where courage was the commonest of qualities.

His zeal in all matters touching the security of the settlers and his sturdy common sense and prompt dispatch of legal business were other factors in his growing prominence. His brusk manner of dealing with men was a part of his charm; the frontiersmen liked his

blunt speech; he was one of themselves, a human being who swore and tipped the jug with the best of them.

When Overton and Fowler urged him to rest while his wound healed he volunteered, much to their surprise, to go to Fowler's plantation. Discerning men that they were, they knew that it was because of Rachel that he had flung himself into danger. In their affection and sympathy they refrained from question and comment; it was better, they agreed, to humor him.

Fowler was both exasperated and amused to find his invalid up and about all day overseeing the work of the plantation. The wound in his shoulder was no bar to his training the Virginia mare or to his cursing the stable boys for sins committed or only meditated. His pictorial epithets delighted Fowler's literary sense, all the more because his cursings were manifestly a natural manner of speech so extravagant and delivered so unctuously that they were comical. Fowler constantly found something new to interest him in Jackson's curiously transparent nature. The young gentleman from Waxhaw Creek recognized no middle ground as to any subject. A thing was either right or it was wrong; and he planted himself on one side or the other with equal determination. When he said yes or no it was with the effect of giving an order to load and fire. The Scotch-Irish racial blend that was asserting itself in America offered no better subject for study than this young gentleman from Waxhaw. Grimly stubborn at the bidding of his Scotch ancestors, he was up the road and on his way to battle when the Irish in him got the upper hand.

A young man in love and fighting his passion—such was Andrew Jackson, prosecuting attorney for the Cumberland district.

When he reappeared at the Donelsons', Overton saw that the sojourn with Fowler had been of little profit. He was grieved by the melancholy in his friend's face, and his long periods of silence. He had come back, Overton knew, in a spirit of bravado to prove to himself that he had subdued his turbulent heart. Mrs. Donelson and Rachel greeted him with their former cordiality, but Jackson knew that his presence caused uneasiness to both women. Robards in a perfunctory fashion inquired as to Jackson's injury and condemned the federal government for its indifference to the welfare of the western settlers—a point as to which Jackson could heartily concur.

He must leave Mrs. Donelson's; there was no doubt about that. And the sooner he left the better. This determined, he was walking through the orchard toward the Donelson stables one morning when Robards hailed him in what Jackson took for a friendly greeting.

"If you're going to the village I'll be glad of your company, Captain," said Jackson amiably.

"No, sir, I'm not going to the village!" shouted Robards in a voice quivering with passion. "I'd like you to tell me, sir, why you came back to this house! Don't lie to me—you guilty hound! You know you deserve a whipping—and by God—I'll give it to you now!"

"Captain Robards," Jackson began, taken aback by Robards' violence, "if you've got to make a fool of yourself, don't do it within hearing of your wife!"

"My God!" Robards cried furiously. "Who are you to speak of my wife. Do you think I'm blind—do you think I haven't seen the way you've tried to attract my wife's attention! Everybody on the Cumberland knows it!"

"If everybody knows it, it's because you've told them—damn your dirty hide!" Jackson retorted. "Captain Robards! It's not me you're insulting—you're insulting your wife! Now listen to me a minute—I have never seen Mrs. Robards alone anywhere; I have never said one word to her that the whole world couldn't hear. And I'll tell you something more—if you hadn't been drunk that day I met you in the tavern I'd have killed you! Any time and any place you want to fight me—and for any reason—I'll be ready! I'm leaving Mrs. Donelson's—not because I'm afraid of you—but to deprive you, sir, of the pleasure of using me as an excuse for blackguarding your wife. I'm moving to Mansker's immediately. A note left in my office will find me. Good day, sir!"

Within the hour Jackson was on his way to Mansker's "station," Mansker being a mighty hunter and Indian fighter who had ranged all the territory between the Smokies and the Wabash. Jackson's first care was to clean his guns and pistols against the chance that Robards would challenge him. The next day Overton, perfect pattern of a faithful friend, joined Jackson at Mansker's, and reported that Robards had not, so far as he knew, mentioned the encounter in the orchard to Rachel or Mrs. Donelson.

"You can put your pistols away, Andy; he knows

well enough that sentiment's against him and if he shot you in a duel over his wife it would only add to his unpopularity. And if you killed him there'd be little mourning, and that doesn't tickle his vanity."

"If it wasn't for making Mrs. Robards uncomfortable I'd call him out!" Jackson declared wrathfully.

He showed himself about Nashville for several days waiting for Robards to make some sign. Hearing nothing, he departed for Knoxville, where he had civil cases to try. There was something pathetic, Overton thought, in Jackson's figure as he rode away.

On the journey Jackson's companions noted his unwonted preoccupation. He kept to himself, finding a melancholy happiness in his freedom to think of Rachel. He was passing through a new experience, bewildering and disconcerting. As he rode through the wilderness he saw Rachel before him, her face sad or alight with happiness as his mood changed.

When he returned to Nashville he learned from Overton that his absence had not served to ease the troubles of the Robardses. The morose and disgruntled captain had left for his mother's home in Kentucky, declaring that he would not return. It seemed to be an open question whether the Cumberland would see him again, as uncertainty and indefiniteness as to his plans were characteristic of him.

"Rachel is well and has gone to the Hays' to stay for a time," Overton reported. "Mrs. Donelson told me the scene before Robards left was thoroughly disagreeable. Lew told Rachel he hated her and hoped never to see her again. He also left his compliments for you.

He went away still possessed with the idea that you are in love with Rachel."

They were talking in Jackson's office, Jackson sitting on the table, his shoulders drooping in what for him was an unusual attitude of helplessness and hopelessness. But at Overton's last words he straightened up suddenly and sprang to the floor, much to the consternation of his favorite hound, which had been asleep under the table.

"He is right!" Jackson exclaimed, and began pacing the floor. "I *am* in love with her—she's the only woman I ever loved! I never meant to admit this even to you and I want you to understand me. You know I'm no slinking coward. I'd give my right hand before I'd step in between any man and his wife. I tried my best to treat Robards like a gentleman; I'd like to have had his friendship as well as his wife's. And don't you ever be deceived about this—I never said one word to her that a gentleman wouldn't say to the wife of a friend. Except that day at Colonel Hays' plantation I never saw her away from her mother's house or out of his sight. If I'm to be mentioned in this affair I want everybody on the Cumberland to know the truth—for Mrs. Robards' sake—not mine!"

"I know it, Andy; everybody knows it," said Overton, touched by his friend's sincere concern that no breath of scandal should touch the woman he loved.

"Lewis Robards has no right to poison the wells of life for that girl!" Jackson went on passionately. "There's not another like her in all the world. My God! This is hell, Overton! I'm in love with another

man's wife! When I went away I honestly hoped they'd be able to get on. I was ready to live the rest of my life loving her—never seeing her or speaking to her. I could do that! Tell me, John," he demanded, plaintively, "tell me you know I could do that!"

"Yes; you could do it," Overton assented. "There's plenty of iron in your blood. But you mustn't let this thing ruin your future; you've got that to think of. They talk of you as sure to go high—and you mustn't let a woman spoil your chance in life."

"What's any future without her!" Jackson flared. "I wouldn't ask greater happiness than to be able to marry her and spend my life making her happy."

"But you don't know that Rachel would marry you if she were free," suggested Overton.

"No, I assume nothing of the kind!"

"But she admires you—she'd be likely to admire you," said Overton comfortingly. "Women do, you know. You're rather a sightly young fellow; the most promising young man we've got."

"Don't talk like that!" Jackson retorted angrily. "I'm not a whimpering baby to be soothed and petted!"

But while Jackson wrestled with his impetuous spirit, the Donelsons let it be known that Rachel would not again submit to humiliation at the hands of her capricious and violent husband. He had gone and she was done with him.

Then a rumor filtered through from Kentucky that Robards would return shortly to carry his wife back to his mother's—presumably with the idea that it would be easier to dominate and browbeat her away from her

family. While it was a question whether he hadn't sent the message merely to annoy and alarm Rachel, the men of the Donelson clan took prompt action. Under the law a man had a right to the possession of his wife, and to avoid contention they decided to put Rachel beyond his reach. They had kinsfolk in Virginia, but so had Robards, and some other haven must be found.

After many family councils it was decided that the safest refuge would be the plantation home of Colonel Thomas Marston Green on the Mississippi near Natchez. The Greens were old friends, who some time earlier had invited Mrs. Donelson to visit them with any members of her family who could make the journey, and Rachel could not fail of a cordial welcome. Colonel Stark, a Revolutionary veteran, was soon to remove with his family to Mississippi, and arrangements were made for Rachel to accompany them.

Jackson was greatly agitated when the report of the Natchez trip was confirmed by Overton. Appalled by the idea of her departure, he was outraged by the necessity that compelled her to leave a land consecrated by her father's blood. All the chivalry in his nature rallied as to the blare of trumpets. If the queen must journey into a far country, he would see to it that she traveled in safety! Fearing that Overton, always cautious, might discourage the idea of his joining the party, he took counsel of Fowler.

"It's a delicate situation," Fowler replied dubiously. "There are always evil tongues to consider and of course the last thing you want to do is to bring Mrs. Robards under criticism."

The glitter in Jackson's blue eyes hinted of dire penalties in store for any critics of his conduct.

"Of course it would be a handsome and perfectly permissible thing for you to offer your services," Fowler went on, "and as I understand you, Colonel Stark is an old man and there are many hazards in such a trip. His wife and daughters are to be of the company and that helps the case. Your first step is to see Mrs. Donelson—*not* Mrs. Robards—and volunteer your services in a spirit of friendly courtesy. If she shows any hesitancy, don't press the matter. If she accepts, the next thing is to ask Colonel Stark's permission to go. And while you're about it, you might ask the colonel if he'd let me join him. I've only been waiting until I got settled to visit New Orleans on some business matters."

"God bless you, Fowler! I'll do exactly what you say. I'll go right out and see Mrs. Donelson."

He presented himself humbly; set forth the dangers of such an excursion, made it appear that he had been meditating a visit to the Lower Mississippi and that as his friend Fowler had business at New Orleans they could quite conveniently go at this time and add to the fighting strength of Colonel Stark's company. His effort to make something casual and impersonal of his interest in her daughter's welfare brought a smile to Mrs. Donelson's lips, but she was pleased and grateful.

He was a manly fellow, this Andrew Jackson, with his steady blue eyes and winning courtesy! The ways of young men in love were not unknown to her, but Mr. Jackson was a new order of being. His humility

as he stood before her won her sympathy before he made his request. It was Rachel whom he wished to serve—Rachel who was dearer to her than life. He inspired faith and confidence; she could be much more comfortable at parting with Rachel with this vigorous, forthright young man added to Colonel Stark's party.

"I thank you, Mr. Jackson," she said with the formality the occasion seemed to demand, "and gladly accept your offer. Rachel, you know, is my baby"—her eyes brimmed with tears—"and it's heart-breaking that these troubles have come to her. Everything promised so well when she was married. She has certainly done her part like the brave loyal girl she is. It would be unjust and cruel to try to force her to live with Captain Robards. I think every one feels that."

"Yes, madam; I think it's generally understood that the fault is not your daughter's," Jackson replied, fearing he might betray his elation at her acceptance by saying more. "I thank you for your kindness, and I will see Colonel Stark at once and put myself under his orders."

CHAPTER VII

ABOARD THE BETSY JANE TROTTER

A FLEET of half a dozen barges bearing passengers and freight swung out from the Nashville wharf. A considerable company assembled to bid the party Godspeed. Rachel stood talking cheerily to her mother until the last moment. No one would have suspected that she had ever known unhappiness. It was only when the boat had been caught in the current and the group on the wharf began to disperse that Jackson saw her sink upon a bench and yield to tears. But she quickly regained her composure and set about disposing of her belongings in the tiny cabin she was to share with the Stark sisters.

Jackson and Fowler had conspired in the outfitting of the boat, providing comforts for the passengers unusual in such a craft. The *Betsy Jane Trotter* led the procession as the flag-ship of the fleet, and Jackson, Fowler noted with amusement, assumed by general consent the rôle of admiral. The prosecutor had carefully inspected each scow as to the stowing of its cargo and the proper arming of its crew. He arranged a code of signals for communication between the boats and designated the rotation of the men for guard duty.

He was a striking figure as he stood in the bow, with

a rifle across his arm ready for instant action, and his trained woodsman's eyes scanning the shores.

It was not until he was relieved that he had speech with Rachel, who, in keeping with her habit of industry, had established herself with her knitting on a bench in the stern. He had thought to save her from embarrassment by addressing her with the formality which was as much a part of his nature as the blustering, belligerent manner he affected with the frontiersmen. But the stilted speech he had rehearsed while his eyes swept the shore died on his lips as she smiled at him and in simple terms thanked him for his interest in her welfare.

"I didn't know a boat could be made so comfortable," she remarked. "Colonel Stark says you changed everything but the name! It was generous and kind, Mr. Jackson, and we all appreciate it."

"Oh, that's nothing! I wish we might have done better. I like to be comfortable myself—and as for my friend Fowler—he demands all the luxuries!"

"He looks capable of getting them too," Rachel remarked, glancing toward Fowler, who had joined the lookout. "This is all new to him, isn't it? Mr. Overton says he's going to have one of the finest homes on the Cumberland."

This impersonal talk was irksome and Jackson felt that his comments on the landscape and the weather prospects were awkward and stupid. And he didn't want her to think him dull. She was the bright particular goddess of his world, but he must not forget that she was the wife of another man and that he was only

a volunteer protector, without even the rights of friendship.

He cherished a delusion that she did not suspect the tenderness or the passion she had aroused in him. With his direct mental processes he could not surmise that she knew what prompted him to make the river journey at a time when his private practise was rapidly increasing and he was sacrificing his own interests in her behalf. She, on her side, explored her memory vainly in the hope of recalling some hero of fact or legend like this knight from the Waxhaw who had appointed himself her defender.

Rachel's favorite bench became the rendezvous for all the passengers, and this was to Jackson's liking. He could lounge a little apart, joining in the talk when his interest was aroused and pretending to himself that he was not watching her, while fascinated by the incessant swift movement of her fingers with the clicking needles and gladdened by the sound of her voice. Occasionally some lonely "station" planted high on a bluff would advertise an outpost of civilization and they would pause to cheer the settlers and trade salt, sugar and powder for furs and fresh meat. New wonders and glories were revealed as they emerged into the broader waters of the Ohio. They tied up for a night at a young settlement on the northern shore, receiving and extending hospitality with the generous friendliness of the frontier. Men of the Wabash country exchanged news with the pilgrims from the Cumberland. The villagers prepared a feast; an Irish fiddler, a recent addition to the settlement, was eager to display his prowess

and a dance was arranged forthwith in honor of the voyagers.

The ballroom was a sprawling warehouse, whose rough floor offered no impediment to eager feet long deprived of the joy of dancing. The light of the few candles thrust into the walls dimmed in the glorious moonlight, streaming through the wide door, that cast a glamour upon the place.

As a compliment to the settlement the ladies of the *Betsy Jane Trotter* had unpacked their best gowns for the affair, and Jackson was obliged to adjust himself to the charms of a new Rachel in silk attire. Her eyes were bright; the color had deepened in her rounded cheeks, and Jackson saw her care free and happy as Heaven had ordained her to be.

As he swung her now and again into the dance, he thrilled at the touch of her hand; a wilder measure than the maddest music of the violin beat in his pulses. When he left her and danced with other girls, his eyes still followed her. He was proud of the attention she received. She was kind, generous and considerate, gracious in bestowing her favors, never relinquishing her fine dignity.

When the weary fiddler pleaded for mercy the dancers were summoned to the wharf, where gingerbread, cider of an extreme hardness and whisky-punch were offered. Jackson, with his inveterate habit of acquiring information, fell upon a hunter just arrived from the northern lakes and was enthralled by his narratives.

He was denoucing the government's failure to en-

force treaty stipulations on the northern frontier when suddenly it occurred to him that Rachel had been beyond his vision for half an hour! He strode away from his group of attentive auditors, his keen eyes sweeping the crowd. The shrieks of delighted children and Rachel's unmistakable laugh led him to the warehouse.

The children from the flotilla, with their new-found friends of the settlement, had been watching the dance, and now that the floor was clear of adults they were rioting in those violent, noisy games dear to youngsters, and Rachel and one of the Stark girls had stayed to superintend the play. Rachel stood against the wall of the warehouse, a vivid figure in her gown of lilac silk, sprigged with little yellow flowers, her black hair drawn smoothly back, her white throat gleaming above the creamy old lace of her fichu, her eyes sparkling and her lips parted in laughter.

Intent upon the children, she did not see him and he stepped hastily back from the door, fearing to spoil the picture by showing himself. It was a torturing thought that one so lovely should have to suffer the tyranny of a churl too base to understand her or respond to the affection she was so eager to lavish upon the world.

He followed the shore a little way and flung himself down, staring at the stars. The mourning ripple of the water in the reeds, the vast starry canopy, the wind stirring in the treetops wrought in him an overpowering loneliness. The sensation was new and disquieting. He had never known fear—not even when as a lad on the Waxhaw he had lain all night in swamps to hide

from the British dragoons. But now, a prey to forebodings, he was suddenly afraid of himself.

He remembered that his mother, deeply religious and counseling her sons to put their trust in God, had prayed in her perplexities. But since the last time he had knelt at her knee, the day she rode away to nurse the American soldiers, he had never thought of prayer. Help might lie away off yonder in the infinite. Rachel would know! Always his thoughts, carrying him into realms of speculation he had never before explored, circled back to Rachel.

When they resumed their journey, Rachel was aware that she must have a care as to the Carolinian. She would be kind—but not too kind! The changing shores provided an infinite variety of topics for safe talk. The entrance of the *Betsy Jane Trotter* into the Mississippi was the most stirring episode of the voyage. The passengers stood in the bow while the boatmen carefully guided the scow into the lordly Father of Waters. Rachel, awed into silence, covertly watched Jackson, who drew himself up like a soldier at attention as if to show reverence to the mighty stream.

"This must be American water to the Gulf!" exclaimed Colonel Stark solemnly, his long white hair fluttering in the wind.

"Ay! This is the great artery of America," murmured Fowler.

"America is only at the beginning," cried Jackson, visibly stirred as the big scow was caught up by the Mississippi's current. "In time there will be settlements clear to the Pacific. You are right, Colonel

Stark! This whole continent must be ours! France and Spain must be got rid of to the south; the British must be driven from the northern border!"

The sweeping gesture of his long arm summarily evicted all foreign powers from the American continent. He turned to find Rachel smiling at his earnestness.

She was seeing a new Jackson, a man of vision peering into the future, envisaging a continent of free people, knit together in one great brotherhood, under one flag. All that afternoon he appeared to be laboring under strong excitement, moving restlessly about the boat, missing no item of the landscape, eagerly seeking her to point out some beauty of the unfolding panorama. When a storm swept the valley and she sought shelter in the cabin she was aware of his nervous step, heard his voice shouting directions to the steersmen of the boats that trailed behind.

He had not referred even remotely to the fact that it was in the interest of her safety that he was making the journey. She liked this in him; it added to the sweetness of his service. There was a luxury in the new-found sense of perfect security. In her girlhood she had dreamed of a lover like this! She forgot Robards' pettiness, his tempests of senseless fury, as she reflected upon Jackson's unselfish and generous kindness.

Now and then a tenderness crept into his voice when he was all unconscious of it and a look would come into his eyes that hinted of the oldest story in the world, and she would be instantly on guard against encouraging any word of love from him. She was happy know-

ing what was in his heart though she must hide from him what was in hers. Fowler she liked increasingly, not merely for his courtesy and good humor but because his affection for Jackson was so evident.

"Jackson understands what all this is about," remarked Fowler one day—"America, I mean. Such men, Mrs. Robards, are the hope of the country. America will be different from the old countries. It's got to develop a different breed to prove democracy is possible, and it will. Down on the seaboard they still think in terms of the Old World. Jackson knows little of that—he thinks only of the common people—who are going to build new states out here and create a nation—unlike anything in all history. Whipping England was only the first step. It's such people as you have on the Cumberland and along the Ohio—poor in purse but rich in ideals—who are going to make America."

Jackson, appearing at this moment, caught him up instantly.

"The people! Yes; the people! Plain, honest people, asking nothing but the right to live! And we've got room for 'em—for thousands and millions of 'em!" he ended fervidly.

At Natchez the Greens gave Rachel hearty welcome. Jackson, captious as to matters that touched her welfare, was satisfied that in their spacious plantation home she would have every care. The Greens, like the Donelsons, were of English stock, thoroughly American, cultivated, substantial folk who had left Georgia to settle in the Natchez district in the belief that

Georgia rightfully asserted jurisdiction over that region in spite of Spanish claims.

Rachel, having assumed that Jackson would return shortly to Nashville, was taken aback by his announcement that he would remain on the river to perfect trade arrangements with Natchez merchants. A plausible excuse and not without some truth! He saw opportunities for strengthening the lines of contact between the Cumberland settlements and the lower Mississippi, and he would employ himself with these matters while Fowler proceeded to New Orleans on his own affairs.

With such explanations the prosecutor lingered, ranging north to Greenville, where he purchased a store, bought and sold slaves and traded horses. A wide-awake fellow, with an eye to the main chance, this Jackson! He seriously considered forsaking the Cumberland and establishing himself in this region so promising in material things, but more importantly the center of the universe because Rachel was there!

The Greens learned to identify the furious pace of his horse as he reappeared without warning from time to time. A friend worth having was this slim, straight young fellow from the Cumberland with his fine manners and expansive ideas. They were moved to mirth when Rachel said that he couldn't be kinder if he were one of her own brothers. At their table his discourse was vastly interesting—as to crops, horses and the irritating foreigners lording it upon the Mississippi.

On a Sunday that he spent in the house, Colonel Green conducted a short service, and hymns were sung, with Rachel leading. Jackson's thoughts roamed far

afield. It pleased him to think of his mother and Rachel as having the same faith in God. In his own cogitations he had rather hazily thought of God as a remote and terrifying being who viewed mankind sternly and punished sinners with savage delight. And Jackson, impatient soul, had held a private opinion that where God might be a little slow in dealing out punishment, he, Andrew Jackson, of Waxhaw and the Cumberland, was justified in taking matters into his own hands! But he was unable to adjust these ideas to Rachel's religiousness, which, like his mother's, was a thing of love, self-sacrifice and service. Through Rachel his education was proceeding. Impatient of instruction and counsel though he had always been, he gave careful heed when Rachel spoke!

Fowler returned from New Orleans with a boat-load of freight to be impelled by oar and sail to Nashville.

"I suppose we've got to go," said Jackson when they met in a Natchez tavern. "But I'm not sure—well—I don't know but I'd do better to stay here——"

This was so utterly unlike his usual straightforward announcement of his intentions that Fowler eyed him carefully.

"If you want my opinion—don't stay! There are two good reasons why you shouldn't remain here. One is that your future lies yonder on the Cumberland where you're already established. The other is that you're in love with a woman that you can't marry. That's presumptuous, but we'd better face the fact. It's not good for your peace of mind to be near her. And—it's not fair to her."

"Yes; I must go back," Jackson assented with a scowl. "God knows I wouldn't embarrass her; and she and the Greens have been mighty kind to me."

"Precisely. You are seeing it like a sensible man—as I knew you would. It's a cruel thing—parting—as hard for her as for you."

"I can't believe she cares anything for me," said Jackson gloomily. "She'd probably be glad to see me go."

"Oh, you needn't trouble about that!" exclaimed Fowler. "If I know the symptoms, she's as deeply in love with you as you are with her. That makes it all the more necessary for you to leave. She's a noble girl and is bearing her misfortunes splendidly. Such women are sent to bless this poor world. Unhappily there are others who only make mischief and cause sorrow."

Something in his tone caused Jackson to gaze at him fixedly.

"I had a wife once upon a time," Fowler remarked. "But things went wrong. That's why I'm hiding myself in the wilderness."

"I'll swear it wasn't your fault!" declared Jackson, quickly on the defensive, as was his way in any matter that touched the honor of a friend.

"That's with the high gods!" Fowler replied and snapped his fingers to dismiss the subject.

Jackson must return to Nashville; that was determined. There were walks and rides with Rachel, but never intimate talk, never reference to Robards or the cause of her flight.

What was in their hearts was quite another matter.

They were young. The ardent winds from the southern seas swept over them, bearing the wistfulness and tenderness of spring through the great valley. Love was in the air. But, strong natures, they were equal to the demand made upon their fortitude and Jackson's iron will helped him in the hour of parting.

"You will come back to the Cumberland one of these days," he remarked with ill-feigned carelessness. "Your people are there; you would never be happy away from them."

"I have no plans for going back," Rachel answered truthfully. "Please tell mother how kindly I'm treated here. The Greens are very likely to spoil me——"

"That can't be done!" he declared with an emphasis that evoked one of her merriest laughs. Outwardly calm, they said their good-bys on the veranda and shook hands with all formality.

"I'm glad you're having Mr. Fowler's company home," she said, hard put for something to say that wouldn't betray her. "He'll be sure to take good care of you."

She laughed again as he drew up his head in a contemptuous rejection of the idea that he was not perfectly capable of taking care of himself. He was like a boy at times—an impatient, restless, fearless lad, who expressed opinions on great questions with the authoritative air of a man of sixty. The blending of man and boy in him was part of the fascination he had for her.

"I didn't mean that—of course!" she cried, not wanting him to leave with the idea that she had meant the slightest unkindness.

No tears or clinging hands at that last moment. She remained where he left her as he walked down the drive to his horse. He sat up straight in his saddle as he rode away, head erect—his first straw hat, a broad-brimmed affair he had acquired in a Natchez shop, drawn low on his head. He brought his horse to a gallop instantly as if he were charging an enemy. But the only enemies he trampled were the invisible tempters urging him to turn back.

He never knew that she wept for a day and a night when he had gone.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CAVALIER TRAVELS AGAIN

THE door of Jackson's office was never locked, and Overton and Fowler, having met in the village, went in to wait for the prosecutor, who was busy in court. A storm swept the valley and to the accompanying patter of rain on the roof Fowler gave Overton, who had just returned from Jonesboro, an account of the journey to Natchez. Fowler had found a jug under a litter of saddles, bridles and boots in the corner, and they sipped whisky and smoked their pipes as they talked.

"We must be careful not to let Jackson think we're sorry for him," said Fowler. "Nothing would fire his wrath like a hint that we sympathized with him in his love-affair. Nothing was ever finer than his conduct on the trip down the river. For a fellow of his spirit to see every day a woman he's wildly in love with and carry himself as he did, like a protecting knight, speaks for good blood."

"But Rachel must know——"

"Of course Rachel knows! You can't hide a thing like that from a woman! He wavered a little when the time came to start home; but he didn't argue the matter when I advised him against staying down there. His judgment can be trusted in such things; he knew it

would be a blunder for him to stay near her. By Jove! I never saw a man so completely in love as he is! It's a thing for tears, Overton! I don't know whether half of it's due to the fact that she's a woman who's suffered shamefully at the hands of another man or whether it would be the same if she hadn't had her unhappy experience.

"Jackson grows on me. I've noticed that no matter how rough the talk gets in a tavern full of idlers, whenever a woman is mentioned disparagingly or any one takes a fling at women in general, Jackson bristles and his eyes get that hard look that means danger—you know the look!"

"Yes, I've noticed it," said Overton grimly.

"We were in a tavern at Natchez one night when a greasy Spaniard slapped a woman—she was undoubtedly a bad lot—and Jackson got the fellow by the neck and chucked him through the door. He came near getting a knife through his ribs for his trouble and I had to drag him out of the place—he wanted to whip the whole crew! It was sheer quixotism on Jackson's part, which the miserable woman didn't understand at all. You don't look for that sort of thing in a man of his upbringing."

"No; but that's Jackson clear through," said Overton. "We don't know all of Jackson yet. He's the most surprising human being I've ever seen or heard of. He's told me he spent some time in Charleston as a boy—learned all the sin there is to know, and he kicked up considerable at Salisbury when he was reading law there, but his experiences didn't do him any harm. He'd

got a little money from the sale of his father's land and spent it quickly, as a healthy boy would, with nobody to check him. He had some trouble getting his bearings; ran around like a hound that's lost a scent. If he hadn't had manly stuff in him he could easily have gone to the devil.

"Luck has been on his side so far. He was fortunate in reading law with Spruce McCay at Salisbury—one of the best lawyers in North Carolina. And that put him in the way of knowing the best people there and he profited by it. That's where he got his grand manners. But he'd drop his books any time to go to a horse-race or a cock-fight. A queer thing about him is that he knows things that he doesn't know he knows! Things other men dig out of books."

"That's true! I've noticed that!" Fowler agreed eagerly. "He's got ideas about politics and government that make you stop and wonder where he got 'em. But he didn't get them anywhere; he was born with them! I've been tempted to give him some books to read but I'm not going to do it—it might spoil him. Away down inside of him he's got the fundamentals of conduct and law, and that's enough. What's wild in him is a healthy wildness. He's the first real democrat this continent has known. And he's planted in exactly the right place —out here where there's plenty of room for him to grow. The experiences ahead of this new country are bound to develop him."

Jackson came in slapping the rain from his leathern hunting-shirt, greeted them with bluff heartiness and asked what they were conspiring about.

"We were talking about you," said Overton, "and saying the meanest things we could."

"Keep right on!" Jackson retorted mockingly. "I just licked a witness who went back on his testimony before the grand jury. I was going to indict the villain for perjury but thought it would be less trouble to give him a trouncing."

"In the court-room, I suppose," drawled Overton.

"No! The scoundrel sneaked out and was running like a rabbit when I caught him. He won't be ready to travel for a week—and I suppose," he added ruefully, "I'll have to pay his board till he's able to sit a horse again."

At the tavern where they went for supper Jackson was in high spirits; talked of the Mississippi, was for immediately controlling it—peaceably or by war if necessary. The whole room listened as he denounced the Spaniards. Having sunk the Dons in the sea he launched upon an even more grateful topic—the whipping into subjection of the Indians, whose atrocities were a matter of almost daily occurrence in the Cumberland country.

Any mental excitment stirred him greatly. He would express himself immoderately, quivering like a furious Jove preparing to launch a thunderbolt, or he would draw himself up with a grand air of uttering the final word on a subject and declare himself with magisterial restraint. He had an actor's instinct for effective exits and entrances. Now that he had finished his declamation against public enemies, white and red, he rose and stalked out through the crowd that had been lending

attentive ear, laying his hand in comradely fashion on the shoulder of one and another.

"We needn't worry about him," said Overton. "With all that fight pent up in him he's going to master his love for Rachel. But he'll never forget her. There'll never be any other woman for him."

"There's never but one woman in any man's life," remarked Fowler. They were standing in the pitch-dark street. Fowler's tone was tinged with a sadness that touched Overton and set him to wondering why this man, who bore all the marks of gentle breeding and education, had buried himself on the frontier.

Though many miles lay between him and Rachel, Jackson enjoyed the secondary satisfaction as the months passed of seeing Rachel's mother. Mrs. Donelson gave him such news as was brought from her daughter in exile by boatmen and travelers. When he talked of Rachel to her mother it was almost as if Rachel herself were present. Mrs. Donelson encouraged him to discuss his own affairs and the prospects of the settlement. He confessed his ambition for military experience; there was plenty of opportunity, as he saw the need, for some pretty vigorous soldiering if only the government would wake up! She bade him be patient, urged loyalty to Washington, who was not having so easy a time in the presidency.

"Mother's taming the prosecutor," said Sam Donelson. "Nobody else would dare tell him he's wrong about anything. He'll take anything from her."

"It's all for Rachel," Mrs. Donelson protested. "If

only she could have married a man like him, how happy we'd all be! A young man who's nice to an old woman like me would never abuse his wife."

Jackson, never perfunctory in the performance of any duty, imposed many new tasks upon himself as the summer waned. He must keep busy; that was the solution of his problem. The fall of the year again impended; winter would sprinkle snow along the shores of the Cumberland, but down yonder Rachel would enjoy warmth and light. No day passed in which his thoughts did not bear him away into a land of enchantment that his love had fashioned for her. He welcomed the long journeys that kept him constantly in the saddle, for they gave him freedom to think of Rachel.

Overton, who had been to his old home in Kentucky, now reached Nashville with astonishing news. He wasted no time in imparting it to Jackson, whom he met at the court-house door.

"Rachel's free! Robards has been divorced by the Virginia legislature."

"How do you know it?" Jackson demanded.

"From Lew's mother at Harrodsburg. I was up there looking into some land titles and stayed at her house. When Robards left here the last time he only stopped at Harrodsburg a little while and went up the Ohio and on to Richmond, where the Robardses have relatives. His brother-in-law, Major John Jouett, is a man of influence in Virginia affairs. Lew's mother had a letter from Lew that the legislature had given him a divorce by special act."

"There's no trick in this?—you got it from Mrs. Robards herself?"

"Yes; I see no reason for doubting it. Virginia still holds authority over Kentucky, and it's perfectly plausible. I assume the legislature has the power to grant divorces. Robards would have special consideration as a Virginia soldier, and as there was no contest I suppose it was easy to get a law passed annuling the marriage. We can of course send for a copy of the act."

Jackson was only half heeding what Overton was saying. The suggestion that a copy of the law that gave Rachel her freedom could be had by applying to Richmond did not interest him. Richmond was a long way from Nashville; his thoughts were already racing toward Natchez!

Rachel was free! The lawyer was lost in the lover who had heard the good news that the woman of his adoration was free to marry again. A light came into his eyes and his jaws set determinedly.

"Come with me to the wharf!" he exclaimed. "There's a boat starting for New Orleans to-morrow and I'm going with it. I want to tell her myself!"

Never was a journey so tedious as that second trip down the Mississippi. He fumed and fretted at delays; suffered torture when it occurred to him that Rachel might refuse him—might even—and this was the most tormenting possibility of all—have met a man more to her liking in the months that had passed since he left her. Dark considerations, that kept him staring vacantly at the shores!

But he became a man of action the moment he landed. He took lodging at an inn, and dressed himself with care. It was only a suit of linsey-woolsey, to be sure, but it was well cut; and a Natchez shoemaker happened to have a pair of shoes embellished with silver buckles that pleased his fancy. Not an ill-appearing suitor he made himself for the handsomest girl in America! Next he got him a horse—an animal of spirit such as the occasion demanded.

At the Greens' the family were gathered in the parlor when the pounding of hoofs in the driveway proclaimed a horseman arriving in haste.

"It must be news of war!" exclaimed the colonel, jumping up.

"It's Mr. Andrew Jackson!" laughed his wife. "No one else rides like that!"

"And Rachel didn't tell us she was expecting him!" said the colonel teasingly.

"I'm not!" Rachel replied, her cheeks crimson at the possibility that it might indeed be Jackson.

"No man is more welcome here," said Mrs. Green. "We'll all be glad to see him."

The traveler's voice, calling sharply to the negroes to take his horse, left no doubt as to his identity.

"Hi, you Mose! What you mean lying there asleep! That you, Tom? Get a blanket on that horse mighty quick! Don't you dare tell me the folks are away from home!"

He crossed the veranda with one stride and smiled broadly as the door opened, disclosing the household hurrying to welcome him.

Rachel, at first alarmed, fearing that he might be the bearer of evil tidings from home, knew from the happy excitement in his eyes that it was not bad news that brought him. He gave at once satisfactory reports of all the members of her family and of such of her friends as he knew. This matter discharged, the Greens with nice discretion retired.

They went out into the golden light of the westering sun—down the long avenue of trees—Rachel Robards and Andrew Jackson, children of destiny. He paused under a great catalpa and faced her.

"You are free. Captain Robards has divorced you by an act of the Virginia legislature."

He spoke the words so quietly that she was slow to grasp their meaning. He waited, watching the changes in her face as the significance of his news dawned upon her. She glanced about bewilderedly, like a child freed from the prolonged punishment of a cruel hand but unable to realize that it has lost its power to wound.

Her hand clutched at her breast as if to quiet a tumult in her heart, then fell limply to her side. Her lips trembled and the tears came.

"That's the end of it—is that what you mean?"

"Yes; I have the news from John Overton, who got it from Captain Robards' mother. I came at once to tell you."

"It doesn't seem possible," she murmured, drawing her hand across her eyes like one waking from a dream. "I never thought I could escape from the dread—the constant fear——" She shuddered as if a cold wind had touched her.

"Those times are over; he can never hurt you again!" he cried passionately. "Try to forget it—put it out of your memory!"

"Oh—you can't understand what the relief means! Even here I've often been afraid—as if something horrible were hanging over me——"

She took a few steps down the road, looking off across the fields to where the declining sun hung upon the distant treetops, trying to adjust herself to the idea of freedom. When she turned toward him again a smile lighted her face.

"We must go to the house and tell them! They've been so good to me; they will be so glad to know!"

"There's more I wish you could tell them," he said, meeting her gaze. He caught her hands, and clasped them tight. "I never thought this day would come. I thought I'd live out my life loving you—seeing you sometimes but never with the right to tell you how great my love is—how I want you—how I need you!"

There was a tenderness in his voice that was new to it. He bent over her, torn with hope and fear, every drop of violence in his blood tamed by her gentle spirit.

"I think I can make you happy," he went on humbly. "I've never loved another woman; I've loved you from the hour you opened the door for me at your mother's house. I'm only a frontiersman and can offer you little, but"—his voice, tremulous with passion, became a hoarse whisper—"I'll work for you—I'll fight for you—I'll die for you!"

She drew away from him but without releasing her

hands, searched his clear blue eyes as she sought a last satisfying assurance that he spoke truly.

"If you love me——" he began, tender and humble again.

She freed her hands and touched his shoulders lightly, caressingly.

"Yes—I do—love you—with all my heart," she faltered; and he took her in his arms.

In the Green drawing-room after the news was told he boldly announced that they were to be married the following day.

"But I'm not ready!" cried Rachel, and was stanchly supported by the women of the house.

"I've waited long enough!" cried Jackson with an air of injury.

"You, sir, have been engaged to marry this lady only half an hour!" Colonel Green retorted.

"I must be married in my mother's house," said Rachel. "She would never forgive me. My sisters and brothers wouldn't like it at all! You must wait, Mr. Jackson!"

"And we want to give you a chest of linen," said Mrs. Green. "And that takes time to prepare."

"I will take care of Mrs. Donelson and all the rest of them!" Jackson announced. "And as for linen, you can ship it to Nashville."

"But you haven't a house for Rachel!" demurred Mrs. Green, though she saw that Rachel was weakening in her plea for delay.

"My wife will never lack for a house!" Jackson declared in his most exalted manner.

"I believe that, sir," cried Colonel Green.

The Greens were unfeignedly pleased that Rachel was to have another chance at happiness. There was no questioning the sincerity of Jackson's affection for her; never had there been a lover so forthright and compelling. His eyes followed her every step as she moved about the room. The discussion over a choice of the wedding-day and a place for the ceremony served to carry them in high spirits through the evening meal.

"If Rachel had refused Mr. Jackson there wouldn't be all this bother," said Mrs. Green.

"No!" cried Jackson. "But I'd be at the bottom of the Mississippi!"

"To avoid any such danger I'll take upon myself the responsibility of fixing the day and the hour for the ceremony," said Colonel Green. "You may not know, Mr. Jackson, that Georgia claims authority over this part of the Mississippi territory. And by appointment of the Georgia legislature I am a magistrate empowered to marry such American citizens as request my services. Therefore I will name this house as the place and the day after to-morrow as the time, at an hour to be chosen by the high contracting parties. And now I give you the toast—long life and prosperity—to our dear Rachel and our good friend, Andrew Jackson!"

The wedding was not quite the simple affair that Rachel wanted, for the Greens, anxious to give the occasion every possible touch of grace, had invited the Starks and other American neighbors, many of whom had learned to know and admire the dark girl from the

Cumberland in the months that she had lived among them. Rachel, at the bridegroom's request, wore the gown in which she had appeared at the dance on their memorable journey to Natchez. He would listen to nothing else, saying that it was that night, when he saw her in the warehouse playing with the children, that he first realized how deeply he loved her. She must always keep that gown that he might see it from time to time through the coming years and be reminded of the day when, believing that he could never possess her, he had touched the lowest depths of despair.

In the drawing-room, dressed with flowers for the event, behind the ranks of white faces were the negroes of the Green plantation—all devotedly attached to "Miss Rachel," who had insisted that they be present.

"I want everybody who likes me to see how happy I am," she said.

After the words, spoken solemnly by Colonel Green, gave her into the keeping of Andrew Jackson and they turned round to the company, the look in her face proved not only her serene happiness but her great pride in the lover who towered above her.

They remained a week before setting out on the homeward journey, for now that he had carried his successful wooing to a happy conclusion and Rachel really belonged to him, Jackson remembered that he had business to attend to—the Greenville store to dispose of and some trade arrangements to conclude before he left Natchez.

"That man," said Colonel Green, amazed at the expeditious manner in which Jackson made his prepara-

tions for departure, "that young man can do more things in a day than any other man I ever knew! Rachel's a fortunate girl. She's got a husband who'd make a masterful commander of an army. He's got it in him to do great things."

Whatever truth lay in the colonel's estimate, it was quite clear that where Rachel was concerned the bridegroom was an incurable sentimentalist. He had espied the *Betsy Jane Trotter* awaiting a cargo, and, chartering her from Colonel Stark, he had the boat scrubbed and outfitted to carry him and his Rachel on their wedding journey.

"When we came down with the Starks," he explained to her jubilantly, "I thought that was the only journey we'd ever take together. And now that I can take you back with me, I want you to sit and knit just as you did before. But there will be no other people on board except the boatmen, and I can look at you as much as I please."

The trip was unhurried. Whether the winds favored or were fickle did not matter. He was twenty-four, she a year younger, and life seemed as infinite as the love that overflowed in their hearts.

"All I ask of life is to make you happy," said he tenderly, as they sat side by side under the stars. "Nothing else makes any difference."

"I'm so proud of you," she said, tears brimming her dark eyes. "I want never to be a trouble to you, my love. I only want to help you. It's wonderful that I can begin life over again and with such a man as you. It's so strange the way it all happened. We must remember

that God brought us together. We must always be grateful. Without you I'd be the loneliest soul in the world!"

The journey through the three great waterways was all the happier because of the dangers that attended it, which gave him opportunity to show his devotion, his constant care for her safety. Home was a word often on their lips as they planned a future that should be a continuing peace. Over and over again, as the great wilderness swept by them day after day, they murmured it. Home! They would found a home and live out their lives loving and serving each other. When, with the high hope and faith of young love, she prophesied fame for him, he silenced her. To serve her, he said, was all he asked of life.

In her happiness she was humble, and to the murmuring of the waters about the boat that bore them to the home of their dreams she whispered prayers to God that she might be worthy of his love.

CHAPTER IX

A VISITOR FROM PHILADELPHIA

NASHVILLE gave them hearty welcome when they landed and surprised the settlement with an announcement of their marriage. A great fellow was Jackson, the people said admiringly; he had got the woman he wanted, just as he was likely to get anything else he demanded of life. And Rachel was a lucky girl to find so worthy a husband after her first unfortunate venture in matrimony. The young prosecutor from Waxhaw Creek was planting his feet firmly on the bluffs of the Cumberland. He gained in prestige by marrying a daughter of the Donelsons, and it was said that marriage with such a girl as Rachel was bound to exert a calming influence upon his turbulent spirit.

They made a light-hearted adventure of the choice of a site for their house. Money was scarce but land was cheap. It was not unusual for a lawyer to receive a quarter-section or even a square mile of land as a fee. They chose a spot close to the Cumberland on rich valley land, partly cleared, with a hill behind it.

"They call it Hunter's Hill and that will be a good name for our home," said Jackson. "The Indians knew this as a great place for game and the white hunters haven't driven it all away. I've seen deer hereabouts within the year and there may be a bear for all I know!"

She drew closer to him with a mockery of fear, merely that he might put his arm about her and reassure her of her safety. She was John Donelson's daughter and had lived among savages and wild beasts all the days of her life and knew no fear.

"I'm so happy! We mustn't forget to be kind to all the world!"

"Yes; we want all the world to be happy," Jackson agreed, lifted, exalted by every glimpse into her kind and generous soul.

The marvel of their love was a never-ending surprise. They laughed happily as he led the way down the deer path, holding aside the underbrush for her to pass through the scrub-oak thicket to where they had left their horses.

In Jackson's cabin office they drew the plans for the house, with Fowler, adept in such matters, assisting.

The house rose magically under Jackson's fierce zeal. He was anxious to lead his Rachel across the threshold of her own home as quickly as possible. Robards had never given her a home, but the lack in her life of a hearthside should now be supplied. And love—a love strong and enduring against all the assaults of chance and time—should strengthen the foundations.

The house was built on generous lines, with the solid oak frame covered with weather-boarding. Every stick of timber that went into the structure was carefully scrutinized by Jackson. The square living-room was ceiled and the walls painted blue. Book-shelves were built across the four corners even though the books to fill them were still to be acquired; deer and bear skins

were strewn about the floor. An enclosed stairway led to three sleeping-rooms whose windows looked upon the river. Their friends rode out to see and admire this spacious mansion built by the prosecutor for his bride. Inevitably there was a housewarming, that the whole settlement might inspect the furniture which had been assembled from Philadelphia and New Orleans, with a few specimens of frontier craftsmanship, for Jackson said they must not forget that they were pioneer farmer folk, and the Nashville cabinet-maker needed patronage.

He derived the greatest satisfaction from standing on the spacious veranda and gazing across the Cumberland to the billowing hills. The house was larger than they needed; his lands were more than he could till, but he liked room—plenty of room! Rachel would watch him as he stood surveying his domain, his lips compressed, his blue eyes dancing with the intensity of his thoughts.

"Beautiful America!" he would exclaim under his breath, with a reverence that puzzled her, and when he found her watching him with wonder in her dark eyes he would laugh and clasp her in his arms.

His delight in the long perspectives of his land of beautiful rivers was not, she found, attributable to mere delight in the landscape or joy in such portions of it as he possessed, but in the thought of the opportunity the new country afforded to people who loved liberty and had the faith and courage to set up homes in the wilderness. It was all for the people—that glorious virgin soil! His face would grow stern and his eyes blaze when he

talked of the rights of the people who were coming over the mountains—rights that were God-given and not to be trampled upon by any man.

Without waiting for an appeal for aid they seemed to know when any of their new neighbors needed help. Helpfulness became a working principle of their lives and newly arrived settlers, encountering difficulties in establishing homes, and the sick and unfortunate called the name of the Jacksons blessed.

"Mr. Fowler is late," remarked Rachel, glancing at the tall clock in the corner.

"Probably delayed by some business in town," Jackson replied. "He didn't expect to get here before supper, but he'll come. He's a man you can rely on. I told him we'd be glad to have him for several days if he cared to stay and he seemed pleased that we wanted him to be one of our first visitors. It must be lonely for him out there with nobody but the negroes to talk to."

"Yes," Rachel assented. "And he's mighty fond of you! Only last week, when I met him in town, he said it was because of you that he's settled out here. He's an unusual man, but—it's strange he should choose to make his home in the wilderness."

"Oh, he told me frankly that his object in coming to the Cumberland was to lose himself. He took me somewhat into his confidence—even telling me that Fowler isn't his true name. I know that people are speculating as to the why and wherefore of his coming out here, but he's given me assurances that his wish to hide him-

self was due to nothing dishonorable in his life, and I believe him."

"I would take him for an honorable man anywhere," said Rachel, whose way it was to be generous in her judgments. "But there is something strange—something unhappy in his life." She shook her dark head sadly, mystified by the unhappiness she had observed in Fowler.

"Perhaps it was an unhappy love-affair," said Jackson and crossed the hearth to clasp her hand. "How sad it is that all the world can't know love like ours!"

Fowler now arrived, encumbered with gifts for his hostess—Shakespeare's plays, a volume of Milton's poems, some table linen and a handsome pewter platter with plates to match. The linen and pewter were spoil from the newest additions to the stock of Nashville storekeepers.

"These books were in the stuff I brought up from New Orleans. Oh, I'm not robbing myself, for I have other copies. I thought they'd look well on your new shelves, Mrs. Jackson."

"I read half of *Hamlet* at Salisbury and lost the book!" said Jackson as he turned the pages of the Shakespeare. "I've always wanted to know what happened to the prince. He seemed to me a very foolish young man—he never got anything done!"

"That's a good criticism of his character," laughed Fowler, and added: "If he'd had half your energy the play would certainly have ended differently."

Rachel had never seen Shakespeare's writings and knew him only as the author of a line that had been

quoted in her presence by a minister when she was a young girl.

"And it always seemed to me the finest thing I had ever heard," she said and repeated: " 'Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds,' " adding, as she pondered the meaning: "If that is poetry—then poetry must be the truth."

"Perhaps poetry is the only truth," said Fowler. "If we only knew!"

He walked to the hearth and stood staring into the flames, lost in revery. Rachel and her husband exchanged glances; they had never seen him like this before. Fowler turned to them again, murmuring an apology, and Rachel directed the talk away from love and sentiment.

The next evening Rachel stood at the living-room window as night stole across the hills. Jackson and Fowler had ridden into town promising to return before dark and already she was anxious, as always in her husband's absence, lest some mishap had befallen him. With an impatient sigh she crossed slowly to the fire and stood there, her hands extended to the crackling flames. The room exhaled a luxurious atmosphere of ease and peace. She glanced round as if to reassure herself that this indeed was her home—the home that he, her lover husband, had created with a single eye to her comfort and contentment. The snapping logs, the very shadows that danced along the walls proclaimed happiness.

Gratitude overflowed in her heart as she surveyed

the room—the table with its snowy linen, pewter rubbed to silver brightness, the prints on the walls, the few books in the corner shelves—Fowler's *Shakespeare* dominating less noble neighbors with its patrician air. She must read and study to fit herself to be in every way a true mate for the husband who had opened to her the doors of a new life. That one line which she had carried in her mind and heart so long stirred in her memory.

"Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds."

She had never loved Robards. He had never loved her, only possessed her; found his delight not in seeking to please her but in exercising a jealous tyranny. He had rarely entered her thoughts since their last parting. The whole episode of her relationship with him had passed into oblivion like a hateful nightmare. A spasm of pain caught her heart at the remembrance of his mad suspicions, his bluster in his fits of passionate hatred. Wherever he was, no doubt he was still hating her—an enemy all the more dangerous because unseen. She pressed her hands to her eyes as if to shut out a hideous picture and was relieved by the sudden sound of trampling hoofs in the lane. She snatched a candle from the mantel, and hastened to the table to light the four tapers in their glass holders.

She was at the door when it opened but stepped back in surprise when she saw that her husband and Fowler were accompanied by a stranger.

Jackson, never appearing to better advantage than when he assumed the rôle of lord of the manor, presented the guest impressively.

"Mrs. Jackson, Colonel Norton, of Philadelphia."

Rachel curtsied; the gentleman from Philadelphia bowed low over her hand. Fowler smiled, knowing that the traveler had not been prepared to meet so charming a lady on the rude frontier. Colonel Norton's eyes expressed their satisfaction with the Jackson domicile as he laid off his military greatcoat and took a seat by the fire.

A negress appeared from the kitchen and at a word from her mistress added a plate to the table. Hot toddies were served to the gentlemen. The colonel praised the tipple and expressed surprise when Jackson told him it was a product of the Cumberland.

"Mr. Jackson thinks anything produced in this territory the best in the world," laughed Fowler.

"I'll swear he's right!" declared Norton heartily.

The supper progressed merrily; Rachel, who, dearly loved a story, drew from the colonel the history of his journey from Philadelphia.

"I've been promoted," said Jackson. "Colonel Norton has brought me my commission as district attorney under the federal government."

He produced the document with a flourish and spread it open that Rachel might see the great seal of the republic and the signature of President George Washington. She inspected it with awe for the president and pride in her husband, and bade Fowler read it aloud.

He rolled off the sonorous sentences with dramatic effect, while Jackson listened with a grin on his face.

"A fine lot of words, Fowler, but that doesn't make

me any more important than I have been prosecuting under North Carolina's title. They're now calling this part of creation the Territory South of the Ohio River."

"Sweeping enough!" remarked Fowler. "Sounds almost like all eternity."

"And well it might!" ejaculated Norton. "We've only pecked the edge of America—God only knows what's out beyond the Mississippi!"

Norton had visited England after the American Revolution, and at Rachel's prompting he gave a vivid account of London social life.

"They're not so happy over there," he said. "The loss of America is really a blow to the English—even the aristocracy is dissatisfied and there's great uncertainty as to the future."

"I wonder," said Rachel, "that more of the English don't come to America. You'd think they would, if there's going to be more wars over there."

"That reminds me," Norton exclaimed. "*One* Englishman has come to America—a nobleman. At least he's disappeared and his noble kin are looking for him. Before I left for the West I was called to the State Department and asked to keep my eye out for a certain Lord Melderode, son and heir of the Earl of Rossington—a family most distinguished in every way. Some one had a foolish idea that I might possibly find him among the Cherokees! They handed me this rather vague description of the man."

He drew a paper from his pocket and bent toward the candle to read:

" 'George John Carrington, Lord Melderode, son of the Earl of Rossington; six feet in height; dark to swarthiness; black hair, brown eyes, nose straight and rather large; lips full. Educated at Oxford; served in the army; studied law in preparation for a public career. No reason is given for his lordship's long absence. Last seen in London four years ago.' "

"Sounds to me like looking for a needle in a haystack," Jackson remarked indifferently. "You'd be more likely to find your man in one of the cities. The heir to an earldom wouldn't find much to entertain him out here where everybody has to work."

"The noble gentleman might have been caught in the upheaval in Paris," remarked Fowler. "I've read that all Englishmen go to Paris when they want a change of air."

"Perhaps they do," said Norton with a laugh. "If this man went to Paris he may have got a knife in his ribs by this time. France has not been a good place for aristocrats of late."

"How long did you say this man's been missing?" inquired Jackson.

"Four years," Norton answered. "His father's getting old and is anxious to have the heir at hand to take over the title."

"Four years? That's a long time," remarked Rachel, rising from the table. "No wonder his family are worried."

As she passed Jackson on her way to the fireplace they exchanged a swift glance; each saw that the other

suspected that Fowler was the man sought. But Fowler in linsey-woolsey of plainest cut, his face rather more weather-beaten than Jackson's, in nowise suggested noble origin. Norton, if he were really interested in the search for the missing man, might have been struck by the planter's cultivated speech and a whimsical touch he gave some of his remarks, which suggested a social sophistication not likely to be found on the frontier.

As the men lighted their pipes Rachel started Norton on a new vein of reminiscence and the adventuring young Englishman was forgotten.

The next morning Jackson, Fowler and Norton rode into Nashville together. The army officer, highly pleased with his entertainment at Hunter's Hill and intent upon his further travels, did not refer again to the lost Englishman.

At noon Fowler sought Jackson at the latter's office and remarked at once: "Well, that was a narrow escape! Of course you and Mrs. Jackson must have guessed I was the man in question."

"Yes; we suspected it. But Norton has left and you have nothing to worry about. He's gone south and will not return this way. He didn't seem greatly interested in his search. You may dismiss him from your mind."

"Oh, it's not of him I'm thinking," Fowler replied quickly. "I saw that he wasn't taking the matter seriously. I think he mentioned the matter last night only to entertain Mrs. Jackson with a romantic yarn! But that's not the point. You and your wife have accepted me at face value without question and now that you

know my name I'll be happier to tell you more. You are entitled to know everything about me."

"That, sir, is wholly unnecessary! There's many a man in this country beginning a new life—a privilege that America offers to everybody. Your wish to tell me more is creditable to you and increases my respect. But I'm perfectly satisfied that you're an honorable man and nothing that could be said against you would in any wise change my opinion."

"I thank you for that," said Fowler gravely. "But—friendship aside—there are reasons why some one should know my identity and I must beg to impose my confidence upon you further. The search for me is a matter of formality—I have been gone four years; when seven years have passed I'll be dead legally. There was never any sympathy between my father and me. He belongs to the strictest and most intolerant old Tory school and my democratic leanings caused much bitterness from my boyhood, but"—for a moment he stared in silence at the wall—"the reason for my leaving England had nothing to do with that. It was more serious; it had to do with my wife, my——"

Seeing that he was deeply moved Jackson stopped him with a gesture.

"This is unnecessary—it is quite unnecessary, Fowler," he said with all kindness.

"No! Let me go on with it. It will be a relief to me to tell you. It was a marriage of affection—deep love on my side, and I believed the young woman loved me. The marriage was not regarded with favor by my father—she was the daughter of a poor baronet and

from a worldly standpoint the marriage was an advantageous one for her. She was gay, fond of society and loved excitement. I tried to accommodate myself to her tastes—with a sincere wish to promote her happiness. Two years of that.

"I was doing my best to adjust myself to a life I hated when the blow came. I found that she and my younger brother had become enamored of each other. He had all the attractions I lacked; hot-blooded where I am cold; and with no serious purpose in life—a dashing, devil-may-care fellow idolized by my father. My brother had not known my wife until after our marriage and they were instantly attracted to each other. I needn't go into details, but I knew they were meeting secretly. I was satisfied that my brother had taken full advantage of her infatuation. I made every possible appeal to her, but it was no use."

"By God! You should have killed him!" cried Jackson, his eyes afire.

"No," Fowler replied with a patient smile. "I didn't see it that way. The thing that cut me was my own failure—the realization that there was something wrong or I'd not have lost her interest and her love. If there was killing to be done I would kill myself—that was one possibility; the other was to take myself clean out of the world that had known me. I decided to throw myself into this new country—and you know the rest."

Jackson regarded Fowler intently. The man's reasoning and his acceptance of his fate were something new in his experience; he was puzzled, mystified; his

own heart was hot at the very thought of the injury done his friend.

"I'm a missing man—to all intents and purposes a dead man. Dead to my wife, my kindred and my country! My material needs are cared for. I inherited considerable property from an uncle—my mother's brother. My affairs are managed by a London solicitor—an old friend who knows my story and will protect me in every particular. If I should die suddenly you will find papers explaining these things in an iron box at my house. I'd like you to notify the solicitor and send him a certificate of my death. That is all."

"Damn it, Fowler!" blurted Jackson. "You gave up too easy! But your story touches me; I feel for you deeply. You've got courage—the will to make a fine thing of your life—and you will do it, sir!" He rose and laid his hands on Fowler's shoulders as if conferring upon him his own will and courage.

"Yes; that would be your way!" Fowler cried eagerly. "And it's from you that I'm learning to live! But the old heartache comes back! Oh; my God, how it comes back! You have no idea what it meant to me —those days I've just spent with you—the sweetness of your home life—the tender love between you and your dear wife. Something like that I wanted and hoped for; it's the finest thing in the world!"

Jackson turned away, fearing to show by word or sign his pride in the wife who was all in all to him, lest it might add to the poignancy of his friend's suffering. Fowler drew from an inner pocket of his coat a worn

flat case and opened it, disclosing a miniature encircled with diamonds.

"I carry that over my heart," he said huskily, "for what she was—for what I thought she'd always be—to me."

The winter sunlight illumined a countenance fair and smiling, with mirthful blue eyes, a mouth delicate and pensive, a head crowned with fine-spun golden hair.

"Beautiful, very beautiful," said Jackson softly, touched by the loveliness of the beautiful face, and repeated: "Very beautiful. I see no evil there. You may have been mistaken—you may have done her a wrong."

"There could have been no mistake," said Fowler with finality. He took the miniature, passed his hand across the smooth surface caressingly and restored it to his pocket.

CHAPTER X

EVIL NEWS AT HUNTER'S HILL

"HOW fast the time goes!" Rachel exclaimed. "We've been married two years! You don't know how lonely it is without you—and you're away so much!"

Always she was at the door to welcome him, or she would fly to the driveway to greet him as he swung from his horse, cheerily assuring her that all was well with him.

"But there will be better times, when I'll never leave you, dear heart!"

They had been separated for only a few days, but Jackson had returned to Hunter's Hill with all the eagerness of a lover after prolonged absence. Their two years together had been marred by no unhappiness. Robards had never returned to the Cumberland, and his name was never mentioned between Rachel and her adoring husband. Jackson, in the fulness of his affection, brought to the marriage relationship a dignity quaint in some of its manifestations. He never addressed his wife even in the intimacy of their home as Rachel, but as Mrs. Jackson when it was not some term of endearment. And she on her side called him my love, my husband or my dearest; never Andrew or Andy. He had schooled himself to a more careful speech in deference to her. Violently as he might ex-

press himself in the company of men, he never used an oath in her presence. Under his own roof he was ever the courtly gentleman. He enjoyed having guests in the house and Rachel, equally hospitable, saw to it that the larder at Hunter's Hill was ready for any demand that might be made upon it.

"I'm sorry to tell you, but I've got to go away again," said Jackson, standing by the hearth with his back to the big fireplace. "I have civil cases to try at Jonesboro and must leave to-morrow. Overton and a dozen others are going for the sitting of the court, so you needn't fear for me."

"Oh, if only you didn't have to make these long journeys!" she cried. "You work too hard! I'm afraid you're doing it all for me. And it's bitter cold. Why don't you let John Overton try those cases?"

"Yes! I see myself! My clients would find out John's the better lawyer!"

"You're the best lawyer in all this territory!" she cried, quick to defend him even from himself.

"I wish the judges thought so! When this is done I shall be home through the spring planting. After the country is settled there won't be these long journeys for lawyers. But you ought to be glad I've got clients yonder in the eastern district; there are good lawyers over there."

"Any one who wants a good lawyer and an honest one wants you," she declared proudly.

They were established for the evening, Rachel sewing, Jackson busy with legal papers, when Colonel Hays and Overton arrived together.

A fierce wind swept the valley, flinging the door wide

as Jackson drew back the bar. He knew even before he noted their grave faces that no ordinary errand had brought his friends to Hunter's Hill on such a night.

"For God's sake, what's the matter?" Jackson demanded the instant the door closed upon the guests.

"Robert, is mother sick—or the children?" cried Rachel.

"No; nothing of that kind," Hays replied quickly. "But it's unpleasant business, to be dealt with promptly."

"Gentlemen, don't trifle with me!" exclaimed Jackson impatiently. "You have something of importance to impart. Go on with it."

"Shall I leave you?" asked Rachel.

"No; it's better that you should hear," Overton answered.

When they were seated in a semicircle about the hearth Hays indicated that Overton was to be the spokesman.

"Martin Featherstone, a reputable man and a friend of yours, came back from Kentucky to-day," Overton began.

"Yes; he's been to Harrodsburg," Jackson interrupted, "about the title to some land he owns over there. What's he got to do with me?"

"Nothing, Andy. Let me tell my story. Featherstone brought news that affects you and Rachel seriously."

"Listen to me, John Overton," cried Jackson with mounting wrath, "you've got bad news of some sort and you needn't hem and haw in talking to me! I'm not a child—out with it!"

"It has reference to Robards."

"Yes; what's the scoundrel done now?" Jackson caught him up, frowning fiercely in an effort to anticipate Overton's story. "I'll wager it's something blackguardly."

"It's about his divorce. You were married in the belief that Robards had been divorced by the Virginia legislature. It was I who brought you the report on information given me by Lew's mother, who undoubtedly believed it to be true. It's as plain as a pikestaff now that I shouldn't have accepted a mere verbal statement but waited for documentary evidence."

"Yes—yes! Spit out the rest of it! Do you mean to tell me no divorce was ever granted?" Jackson cried, his hands clenched and his eyes blazing.

Rachel with a moan covered her face with her hands. With a bound Jackson was at her side, his arm about her, murmuring reassuringly.

"We must face the thing as it is," said Hays. "It's a damnable business but not without remedy."

"Go on, Overton," said Jackson hoarsely.

"There has been a divorce," said Overton, "but only recently. I don't doubt that Mrs. Robards—Lew's mother—misunderstood the matter completely. She wouldn't have intentionally misrepresented the facts. Lew had only received permission from the Virginia legislature to sue for divorce in the Kentucky court. Divorce is of course an unusual remedy, and Virginia has no general law on the subject. I was very remiss in not finding that out."

"The error was mine!" said Jackson with a gesture

that acquitted Overton of culpability in the matter. "And was the suit never brought?"

"Yes; but never tried till last September. Legal notice was published in a Kentucky newspaper, but of course we never saw it."

"Robards never intended we should see it!" Jackson shouted.

"Very likely. We could only have seen it by chance. But I have Featherstone's word for it that the divorce was granted. It all comes down to this: when you were married at Natchez the action in the court at Harrodsburg was still pending."

"In other words our marriage is void in law! We've been living in adultery! That was what the contemptible beast counted on—his last stab at the woman on whom he had visited every cruelty. How positive are you that the case was ever tried?"

"Featherstone says he inspected the record. The decree was entered on the twenty-seventh day of last September."

"That's like the beast—to let the suit lie there for two years for the joy he would get out of knowing—as he probably did—that I was likely to marry the woman whose happiness he tried to destroy! I'll kill the fellow! No man shall play a game like that on me and live!"

"The first thing," said Hays, ignoring his brother-in-law's violence, "is to get a copy of the record of the proceedings in Kentucky. You and Overton have to leave for Jonesboro to-morrow. John says that's imperative. If you'll trust me to inspect the records I'll bring a

certified copy of the decree. Then when you come back you can repeat the marriage ceremony."

"The marriage ceremony!" Jackson roared. "That would be what Robards wants—to put the stigma of adultress upon my wife—publish to the world the infamous lie that my marriage was irregular! By the eternal God! I'll not submit to it!"

"Now, Andy," said Hays calmly, "you're making too much of it. It isn't fair to Rachel for you to go to pieces this way. If you'll just quiet yourself we can all see the thing straight and decide what is best to do."

"We want to do what is right," said Rachel, now wholly composed.

"Of course, Rachel," said Hays, "and we all want to protect you in every way possible."

"Protect!" cried Jackson, furious again. "The idea that she has to be protected from me!"

"Why, of course that's not it, dear," said Rachel pleadingly. "We trust each other—and that's all marriage is anyhow."

The next day Jackson executed a bond binding himself to marry Rachel Robards in case no impediment to their union should appear—this to cover the time necessary for Hays to inspect the record at Harrodsburg. A quaintly phrased instrument, according to the custom of the time. It was payable to William Blount, governor of the Territory South of the Ohio River, in the sum of one thousand pounds.

Jackson, fuming at the trap into which his impetuous

wooing had brought him, wrote his name large, and Hays and Overton signed as sureties.

"It's like Jackson to insist on this," said Overton as he and Hays left Jackson's office where the bond was written. "Though it's payable to the state the real purpose is to protect Rachel. Having made one mistake, Jackson wants to give evidence now of his perfect good faith from the beginning."

"I'd like to see anybody question his good faith!" said Hays with a grin. "Andy's pride's hurt—he's bitter at himself for putting Rachel into this awkward position."

"She takes it calmly enough. There never was an attachment like theirs. All the powers of hell couldn't keep them apart."

Rachel was to stay with her mother until Jackson's return. The parting was hard. It seemed that a sinister hand had stretched out of the dark to strike at them.

"It will all come right," said Jackson bravely. "We belong to each other, law or no law."

"Yes; to the very end, my dear love," Rachel answered.

But on the road Jackson was a prey to fears. He fell behind his companions to enjoy the luxury of the morbid thoughts that beset him. A gust of wind flung up the dead leaves at the roadside and frightened his horse. He cursed it harshly and the very sound of his voice seemed unfamiliar. He was oppressed by forebodings as to the future. If he should lose Rachel! That would be the end of all things.

He straightened himself in the saddle at the thought of her but was unable to shake off the apprehensions that beset him. That belated divorce would be talked about; malicious tongues would wag. His life had been flowing too evenly, that was it, and malign powers had contrived this thing for his humiliation. But it was something to fight! Whoever spoke evil of Rachel should die. The woman who had put her life into his hands should not find him unworthy of her trust. Through the bleak winter landscape cunning enemies mocked him. To die and leave Rachel—or if Rachel should die and leave him alone! He put his horse to the gallop in a sudden craving for companionship.

CHAPTER XI

AGAIN AT HUNTER'S HILL

WITH feverish haste Jackson dispatched his business at Jonesboro. The ever-watchful Overton saw that he was ill, but Jackson indignantly rejected a suggestion that he spend a few days in bed to throw off the heavy cold that clutched him. The revelation of the irregularity of his marriage was constantly in Jackson's mind; he insisted on discussing it, distorting and magnifying it. When his last case had been heard he declared his purpose to return to Nashville immediately. Overton, obliged to remain another week, begged him to wait until they could return together.

"It's suicide for you to start home in your condition; you need a doctor's care. Rachel will never forgive me if I let you go alone. If you die on the road I'll never forgive myself!"

"You're a fool, John Overton, if you think I'm going to die till I get through with this business! There are two hunters at the tavern I know well and I'll hire them to travel with me. In fact, I've already made the arrangement," he added with a grin of satisfaction. A fit of coughing shook him and he clung to a chair for support.

Overton watched him with dismay. "You're mad, Andy Jackson! It's not fair to me for you to start

with that trouble in your lungs. Nothing would please Robards more than to hear you were in a hole in the ground."

"Me—die—and leave that scoundrel to laugh at me——!"

Jackson, speechless from coughing, silenced his friend with a gesture. He had reasoned that with the two hunters, expert in rapid marches, he would make much faster progress than if he waited for a larger party. He must go! He was homesick for Rachel, eager to learn what news Hays would bring from Kentucky.

He reached Nashville without mishap and rode at once to the Donelsons'. His thunderous knock at the door brought Rachel from the spinning-wheel. As he stumbled across the threshold his white face, drawn with suffering, and his fever-lit eyes, told his story.

"You are ill, my love, my dearest!" Rachel cried.

"Not now; I'm well now. Seeing you—seeing you—has made me well again!"

But the gasps in which he spoke told a different story. Mrs. Donelson, hurrying to the room, appraised his condition at a glance.

"Quick, Rachel!" cried she. "Send Eben here to me! Tell Jason to fetch the doctor and you and Sally get the bed ready in the big room. We'll want the warming-pan and plenty of hot water!"

For five days the sick man spoke only to curse the enemies that haunted his delirium. The two women tended him tirelessly, taking turns for the night watch. Poulticed and dosed, he was finally free of the fever,

and, pitifully weak, smiled at them one morning and demanded to know how long he had been there. His second demand was for news of the result of Colonel Hays' mission to Kentucky.

"Don't worry about that," said Mrs. Donelson briskly. "It's a long time since you had a good rest and you're going to have it now."

Her kindly scolding and Rachel's persuasions and cajoleries served to prolong the period of his convalescence. He scoffed at the idea that he had been seriously ill, though the doctor said that no other man in his condition could have survived the journey from Jonesboro.

"Here's a copy of the decree," said Hays when the matter could no longer be postponed. "It's all perfectly regular; there's no question about it now."

Jackson read the document carefully and swore with a vigor that was reassuring as to his return to health. The record recited in formal phraseology that the case of Lewis Robards against Rachel Robards had been tried before a jury, which found that the defendant had deserted her husband and had thereafter lived in adultery with another man. The court therefore ordered that the marriage between the parties be dissolved.

"It's a damnable lie!" cried Jackson. "The scoundrel wrote that word adultery into the records out of sheer spite! If we needed any proof that he's a damned coward we have it here! I'll go to Harrodsburg and have the case reopened! I'll not have that insult to the noblest woman in the world left in a public record! I'll show up the beast for what he is!"

Fowler, arriving during this deliverance, lent his aid in the difficult business of quieting the sick man.

"Let the thing lie as it is," he advised. "The mischief's done, but you're sure of the decree and in the long run that's all you want. What you say about Robards' malevolence is true, but you've seen the last of him. To reopen the case you'd have to go to the Virginia legislature; Robards would resist and might defeat you. It would take a great deal of time and you haven't got it to waste. It was a foul blow, but it will only arouse sympathy for you and the woman you love. Robards hasn't a friend on the Cumberland. No one will think the less of you, and no one questions your entire good faith."

"By the Eternal God! I'd like to hear any man question it! I've got two pistols that'll answer any man who dares to question my honor!"

"The best answer will be a repetition of the marriage ceremony," said Fowler. "And you'll be happier when that's done."

Jackson was still storming when Rachel appeared with a bowl of broth, and they left her to woo him to a better frame of mind. Peace was the first word and the last in her simple philosophy. They would not allow the wrong done them to spoil their lives. She sought to tranquillize him by making light of the whole matter.

"You're a free man now, dear. Maybe you don't want to marry me," she suggested teasingly.

"Not marry you!" he flared in alarm. "Do you mean you're done with me?"

"Well—I thought you seemed more interested in starting a quarrel with the court than in marrying me," she replied.

"We'll fix the day now and here! There's got to be another ceremony—and the sooner the better."

"Just as soon as you're able to go home," she said. "We will want to go back to the Hill—our dear home—as soon as we really belong to each other."

"As if we hadn't always belonged to each other!" he said scornfully.

Mrs. Donelson was appealed to and agreed that in three days he could safely travel. A minister should perform the ceremony—this was Rachel's wish—that they might have God's blessing upon their union.

"This doesn't make you any more my own, dear love," she whispered, when he took her in his arms after they were again pronounced man and wife.

With his usual candor he gave wide publicity to the fact that there had been an error as to the divorce which was now corrected by the formality of a second marriage. Their neighbors should know the truth about it, he said.

His enemies were quiet just now, and if they muttered about the divorce it was with discretion, perhaps believing that the thing would keep and be all the more effective if revived after it had faded somewhat in local memory. The devotion of the Jacksons to each other was already laying the foundation for a maxim expressing the highest standard of married bliss—as perfect a pair as the Andrew Jacksons!

And so peace reigned again at Hunter's Hill.

Without effort Jackson became a leader among the young men of the Cumberland. If he swaggered a little it was only Jackson's way; if he was arrogant, blustered, swore, they liked it. Twenty-seven and not another man of his years between the Smokies and the Cumberland with anything approaching his success or popularity! A trustworthy fellow, whose word was as good as cash; and thoroughly human for all his top-loftiness. Did he not fight cocks, race horses, take his glass of whisky just as if he were not the government solicitor and a man of property whose opinions on all subjects received respectful attention at tavern firesides? Yes; he had ideas, that Jackson!

The contentment at Hunter's Hill touched new altitudes through the spring and summer. Jackson set hard tasks for himself; there were still enforced absences, compelled by the prosecutorship; his private practise was growing and the prosperous course of the plantation gave him increasing delight. He was the busiest man in the whole district; and if there were matters which he necessarily neglected at Hunter's Hill they were cared for with fine intelligence by Rachel.

Her perfect understanding of his varying moods and tempers was no small item of her qualifications for sharing his fortunes. In her eyes he was always right and always invincible. If only he were not so ready to fight! But fighting was a pardonable sin on the Cumberland. A wise young matron, she didn't bother him with foolish warnings as to his safety. Her feeling that

he was blessed with a special immunity from injury strengthened into a superstition. If men didn't want to get into trouble they would do well to walk softly in the presence of her husband! She was less afraid that white outlaws or an Indian might shoot him from ambush than that he might catch cold by exposure to the elements. Fortunate in so many things, he had luckily married a woman who didn't cry on his shoulder every time he left the house!

CHAPTER XII

NEW HONORS FOR THE CAVALIER

TWICE the four seasons took their orderly course through the valley, but light and cheer held unbroken dominion on the Cumberland. It was always spring, Fowler said, at Hunter's Hill! That loyal friend declared that the Jacksons' romance began anew every morning.

In Jackson's absences Rachel bravely fought her loneliness; but at such times she was haunted by a prescient sense that doors of undreamed opportunity would open to him. Not for any imaginable gift would she have thwarted his hopes or ambitions; but the sweetness of their life was so precious that she watched with dread the inevitable course of events that thrust him forward more and more as a man of importance in the community. What was to be would be; this dictum was a part of her religious faith and she could not escape from it. Fowler, often at the Hill, and knowing her fears, sought to allay them.

"He's bound to win fame and power. Nothing can stop him. I have seen most of the leaders in this territory and your husband has qualities that make him superior to all of them. It's not just a matter of his abilities; it's his understanding of the heart of the common man!"

"Yes!" she cried eagerly and then translated Fowler's words into a phrase that was her highest tribute: "He is so kind!"

It was now the year 1796 and the steady inflow of settlers had increased the population of the territory to a point where the dignity of statehood was attainable and a call was issued for a constitutional convention.

"The meeting's at Knoxville; and I hope you'll go with me," said Jackson to Rachel in announcing that he had been chosen a delegate. "You stick so close to the plantation that the change will do you good. We'll make a little celebration of it, and you'll enjoy seeing your old friends over yonder. It's a hard journey in the winter, but I'll make it as easy for you as I can."

"Oh, I've made harder journeys than that!" she replied, pleased that he wanted her to go. "But I might be in your way."

"You couldn't be in the way! I'll need you around to pull on the reins if anything riles me!"

"But you mustn't lose your temper in an important meeting like that!" she retorted, though in her perfect loyalty she usually thought his passionate outbursts justified and a necessary outlet for his tempestuous spirit.

Even now he was pacing the floor, his mind concentrated upon the labors of the convention. By the tense look in his face she knew that he was dramatizing possible conflicts, assailing invisible adversaries.

There were half a dozen other women in the party they joined for the journey to Knoxville. Rachel, mounted on the best horse in the Hunter's Hill stables,

bore cheerfully the hardships of the journey. On two bitter nights when no "station" offered shelter they slept by camp-fires at the roadside. The indomitable pioneer spirit was fortified by their sense of the important duty that lay before them, the lifting to statehood of this broad domain whose bounds were hardly yet defined.

Arriving at Knoxville, they found comfortable quarters and Jackson took council of his associates as to the work to be done. Rachel needed no introduction to the town people. She not only was Mrs. Andrew Jackson, the wife of a delegate from Davidson County, but entitled to additional consideration as a daughter of John Donelson. She renewed acquaintance with General Sevier, the hero of a hundred battles, who had known her from childhood.

"Well, Rachel," said the general, "so you've married Andrew Jackson. He's a fine young man—but he's a little too sure of himself. You'll have to put a curb on his temper."

"He's as gentle as a lamb, General. He wouldn't hurt any one for the world!"

"Let's hope you are right," he replied a little tartly.

No pillared forum was required for the gathering of the fifty-five delegates. The deliberations were at the edge of town in a building that had been used as a storehouse for military supplies. It had been prepared for the convention at a cost of twelve dollars and sixty-two cents! Men in linsey-woolsey or leathern hunting-shirts conferred as simply as if they were only farmers talking of their crops at a corn-husking.

While the men were at work the women who had accompanied their husbands held their own councils at the hearthsides of the villagers, discussing over their sewing and knitting, to the murmur of the spinning-wheel, the domestic problems of the frontier.

Rachel now saw her young lord in a new aspect. Watching the proceedings on several days she was struck by the judicial air he assumed; he even showed himself capable of patience! Even more she was pleased to note that his associates gave careful heed when he rose to speak—always with a few words, uttered in his straightforward fashion. He was appointed a member of the committee designated to do the actual drafting of the constitution—no small honor for the young gentleman from Waxhaw Creek who had turned his face westward with so little schooling to his credit!

He voiced the general concern of the territory as to matters of defense. The Spaniards to the south must go! The Tennesseans knew that the British had never relinquished their military posts at Oswego, Niagara, Mackinac and Detroit and they did not relish the idea of living on a frontier that was clamped between two foreign powers. The wave of emotion that swept across the Atlantic from the French Revolution and shook the American seaboard was well spent before it crossed the mountains. If one faction at Philadelphia threw kisses to France while the other flirted with England, the men in the hunting-shirts were not deeply interested so long as Europe kept her troubles at home.

Whatever touched her husband's life was of interest

to Rachel. At the end of every day he gave her an account of the proceedings.

"We need a name for the state," he remarked one evening. "Some of the delegates want to call it Washington and others are for Franklin. But these names are going to be stuck on counties and townships all over the nation. We ought to get something that *sounds* like this country."

"Why not Sevier? No man has done more for this territory than the general. It would be a great honor to pay the hero of King's Mountain."

"Not with my vote! The old man's got the swell head now, and besides it would be a mistake to take the name of a living man."

"But," said Rachel mildly, "Washington is still living and they're using his name everywhere."

"Bah! There's considerable difference between George Washington and John Sevier!"

"Why do you feel that way about the general? I'm sure he wants to be friends with you."

"Maybe he does!" Jackson assented dryly. "Try some other name."

"Cumberland?"

"No! We're not going to name this state for any English duke."

"Why not Tennessee? There's no such objection to that."

"Good!" Jackson exclaimed, striking his hands together. "It's a good long word and there's music in it." He seized quill and paper and printed the name, holding it off for her contemplation. "Overton says my

spelling's worse than sin, but there's not much chance to go wrong on Tennessee if you put in *n's* and *s's* enough. It looks well and has a good sound. I don't believe we could do better."

Rachel was present in the convention hall the next day when the question of a name arose. The subject was discussed listlessly for a time; sentiment seemed favorable to the choice of Washington; but before the presiding officer put the question, Jackson rose.

"I think, sir, we should have a name identified with the history of our territory. Our state's going to be the finest in the Union and we ought to have a name that carries the idea of the broad sweep of it between the mountains and the greatest of American rivers. The name Mississippi is already taken, but there's another stream, already associated with our territory—a beautiful river whose waters touch many miles of our soil. I think we would make no mistake in giving its name to the state. I therefore move that we name our state Tennessee."

"Good!" cried a dozen delegates, and the resolution was adopted without a dissenting vote.

"I ought to have told them it was your idea," said Jackson as he walked with Rachel to the tavern through the starry twilight of the January evening.

"There was no reason why you should," Rachel replied. "It was the way you proposed it that made them accept it so quickly."

"No; it was the best idea, and it was yours. You named your state, and I don't know of anybody who had a better right. I've thought a good deal about your

father since we came here. It's a pity he couldn't have lived to sit in the convention with Robertson, Sevier and Blount. He was a great man—that father of yours. He did a heap for this country and I wish he could have lived to see it a state."

His affection for the broad sweep of territory between the Smokies and the Mississippi was, Rachel knew, akin to his love for her. Few understood, as she did, how greatly he was swayed by sentiment, or his passionate loyalty where his affections were engaged.

"Tennessee!" he exclaimed, pausing at the tavern door. "The land of beautiful rivers and green valleys. May she live for ever! As steady as one of the stars up yonder—and as bright!"

With the constitution written—twenty-seven days sufficed for the task—the Jacksons found it necessary to remain a week to satisfy the social demands of new friends and old. Jackson, his thoughts reverting to his plantation, bought two field hands, a supply of seed corn, and ordered a farm wagon to be constructed after ideas of his own. He supervised the building of the wagon in the blacksmith shop, which served as a club, where, in the grateful warmth of the forge, with the anvils clanging, the talk ranged from the mysteries of the farrier's art to politics—and back again. Jackson in his most authoritative fashion would clarify questions raised by the loungers as to the processes by which the territory was on its way to statehood; but at any provocation he would drop the constitution and project himself into a horse trade.

They were at Hunter's Hill again as spring moved

northward across the Cumberland. Jackson's primary passion was the farm; the law just now was a nuisance. It was his ambition to produce on the plantation as far as practicable everything he needed. Rachel, too, had the pioneer woman's pride in the sufficiency of her own acres, and in her skill in the domestic arts derived from her Virginia mother. Their evenings were given to planning for the future in the spirit of buoyant youth. If he had brought from Knoxville a new formula for curing hams, she was equally anxious to test some dyes she had found there on yarn of her own spinning. Always it was of home they thought; and he counseled with her as to whether it would not be wise to resign his position as prosecutor, particularly now that the change to statehood would make the office elective.

"As soon as I get rid of that we'll begin to live," he said.

In July the news reached Nashville that Tennessee had been admitted as the sixteenth state of the American Union. That fact was accomplished; he had done his part in creating a commonwealth, and he sat with Rachel on the veranda in the summer dusk and surveyed the growing corn contentedly.

But their peace was not to last. He came home one day wearing a troubled look. It was never her way to question him and she waited patiently until at the supper-table he remarked:

"They're talking of sending me as representative to the Congress at Philadelphia. I care nothing about it. And I don't think I ought to spare the time from the plantation."

He was quick to see the dismay in her face at the suggestion that he might have to leave her. Hunter's Hill was a sufficient world for her, and she was appalled by the thought of a break in their companionship. She knew from the narrowing of his eyes and the tightening of his lips that the temptation to go was great, and she steeled herself for his question.

"I suppose I'd better tell 'em I can't do it?"

"Why, of course you must go, dear," she replied in her habitual gentle tone. "It's another honor for you, and you deserve it."

"It's not a question of being an honor," he replied, his frown deepening. "They want somebody to go who can collect our claims against the government for what we've spent for defense and——"

"And," she caught him up, "the people know you are the best man to do it! You'll get their money for them!"

She smiled bravely, happy in the thought that she was making his acceptance easier.

"But it's a long way to Philadelphia," he demurred. "And those fellows down there won't pay if they can get out of it. They don't care a hang for the people on the frontier. Somebody's got to go who will talk straight to those fellows."

She was secretly amused at his flaming belligerency at the prospect of a fight. If there was battle to wage with the powers of government, the chains were not forged that could keep Andrew Jackson on the Cumberland! With all his forthrightness and swiftness of decision as to ordinary things, she knew that it was only

in matters that touched her happiness that he ever showed indecision—and she loved him the more for it.

"There's no question but you must go, dear," she said with finality.

He kept close to the plantation while the election was pending, making no speeches and soliciting no votes. A messenger from Knoxville, where the returns were tabulated, brought him word of his election and found him in the barn-lot breaking a colt. Rachel, honestly elated and anxious that he might have no qualms at leaving her, pronounced his success a great triumph.

"I suppose there's no getting out of it now," he said that night as they sat before the fire; but she brushed the hair from his forehead, patted his cheek and told him that of course there was no evading the duty.

The chill of autumn was in the air and he dropped a fresh log on the fire and brushed the hearth carefully with a broom of twigs. She knelt beside him, clasping his hands.

"You'll be starting pretty soon and you must look your best when you go to Philadelphia. I knew you'd be elected so I've been getting things ready for you. I've made some new shirts and underclothes. And I went to the tailor last week and told him to make you a new suit in the best style."

"Yes; he dragged me in to try on the coat to-day! We'd be in a nice fix if I'd been licked!" He bent down and kissed her on the forehead. "Just riding over the fields this evening made me homesick before I started! I'd like to stay right here with you till I die—watching things grow, breeding horses and cattle; not

caring a hang about the rest of the world! All I ask is to live here in peace with you, my dearest."

"Peace!" she repeated in her gentle voice. "Why, my dear love, you're a born fighter! No man ever loved a fight as you do. You remind me of those knights in the story-books who were at war all the time. You would have been a great knight in the olden times; always at war—but always at war for the right!"

"Am I like that?" he demanded, gazing at her with knit brows. "It's strange to hear you calling me a fighter. I swear I don't like fighting! I wouldn't hurt anybody—not unless it was somebody that needed hurting!"

He smiled grimly as she laughed at the characteristic reservation with which he ended. Hers was a merry laugh, spontaneous and musical; no one else dared laugh at him or taunt him. He might be profane, arrogant, belligerent elsewhere, but not at home with Rachel! A hound rose from the broad hearthstone, stretched himself and invited attention. She slipped his silken ears between her fingers and scolded him for his laziness.

"Bullet and I know who's the head of things on this plantation!" said Jackson, bending over to pat the dog. "It's a queer thing," he went on as he filled a cob pipe from tobacco carried loose in his hunting-coat pocket, "a mighty queer thing that when I'm here I'm as meek as that hound. I wish to God I didn't have that spark inside of me that blazes up sometimes and makes me want to fight—to fight—to *fight* and *win* the fight!" He was not often like this and she watched him wonder-

ingly. "What is it about me?—tell me that!" he demanded.

"It's your sense of the right," she replied slowly. "It's because you've got that in you that I love you, my dearest. It goes with your loyalty and courage. A man with your high principles has got to be ready to fight. That's why the people love and trust you."

"Yes; and some of them hate me—they hate me like the devil!"

From his tone one might have thought that he was rather proud of being hated like the devil.

"So far your enemies have been a credit to you. I pray God every day you may always be true to the right, my husband!"

They were up with the dawn on the day of his departure and Rachel prepared his breakfast with her own hands. She insisted on riding with him for the first five miles of his journey. The sun crept out of the November mists as they started, and this Rachel interpreted as a favorable omen. As they rode side by side they exchanged last words as to the work of the plantation. The slaves were trustworthy and devoted to their mistress. Mrs. Hays would visit her for a time —Jackson had arranged this—and he urged her to go to her mother's whenever she was threatened with loneliness. He had thought of everything that touched her comfort and peace of mind.

At a high point in the road they dismounted and lingered—two lovers, summoning their courage for the moment of parting. She tried to be gay, telling him

never to have a fear for her safety; repeated her injunctions as to his care of himself—like a mother bidding good-by to a child; teasingly bade him beware of his temper in the Quaker capital; he must not indulge his weakness for fighting! He must note particularly what Washington and all the rest of the great men looked like and not neglect to bring news of what the women were wearing!

"I shall see no women!" he protested. "The only woman in the world is here on the Cumberland!"

The mounting sun urged haste if he would make the most of the day. She gave a last look at his effects, strapped to a led horse.

"My dearest love, you must go now," she said—lightly, as if the separation were not so important a matter after all.

Her arms went round him; they clung to each other, their cheeks together. Tears filled her eyes and her lips trembled, but he lifted her upon her horse and put the bridle-reins in her hands, heard her whisper as she bent down for the last kiss:

"The world is calling you away from me—but you will come back——"

"Soon! Never fear I shall make all haste, my dearest!"

He ran after her, crying: "Let me see you smile again!"

"God bless you, dear husband!"

She smiled through her tears and for a moment her hand rested on his bare head in benediction.

CHAPTER XIII

LADY MELDERODE

THE world seemed a different place to the young gentleman from the Cumberland as he traveled toward the seat of government. The settlers' cabins had a new significance as he viewed them now with the eyes of a representative of Tennessee in the Congress of the United States. Poverty! The one-room cabins with their meager furnishings, the coarse fare, the ill-clad children, called insistently upon his sympathies. On the Waxhaw he too had known pinching poverty, and his heart was wrung with pity for these earnest, hopeful, uncomplaining people. Often, rather than trouble the owner of a cabin home, he would choose a camping place, cook his supper and sleep under the stars.

He rode through Cumberland Gap with a feeling that he was crossing into hostile territory. What did they know or care, those people in the rich seaport cities, about the poor settlers west of the mountains with only a little corn between them and starvation? Taverns now more frequently offered shelter and the discussions at their firesides opened new vistas to his imagination. He was irritated to find American affairs subordinated to the disturbed condition of Europe; as if the protection of that thin line of frontier cabins

that stretched from the mountains westward wasn't sufficient to engage the attention of American citizens!

But Jackson listened. With the caution of a wilderness hunter venturing into new territory he was silent, wary, watchful. On the Cumberland men talked of France and Spain only as those powers incited the Indians. Here men talked of London, Paris and Madrid—but chiefly of affairs in France, where four years earlier King Louis' muddled head had rolled into the basket. That incident hadn't seemed important at Hunter's Hill—only a silly king the less!—now it appeared to be an event of world-shaking significance. At Nashville they would hardly have known their representative if they had seen him lending ear to these discussions of international affairs without breaking in furiously with his own opinions.

In his hunter's garb, with a coonskin cap drawn low on his head, he rode into Philadelphia heralded only by a snow-storm. Erect in his saddle he rode slowly through the streets with his keen eyes viewing the substantial red brick houses, the well-dressed pedestrians, the heavy coaches rolling over the cobblestones. He had inquired of travelers on the last stages of his journey as to the inns of the city and having inspected several of these he chose the City Tavern as offering comfortable lodging. He arranged for the keep of his horses at the tavern stables and gave the hostlers minute instructions as to their care. He could have sold them to advantage, but they were a tie with Hunter's Hill and Rachel!

Before he had finished unpacking he was miserably

homesick; but no hint of this crept into the long account on his journey that he wrote to Rachel.

While he waited for the Congress to assemble he explored the city, finding its varied activities bewildering in contrast with the indolence of the Charleston of his youthful adventures. He went alone to view the bareback riding and tight-rope walking at Rickett's Art Pantheon and Amphitheater; and in O'Eller's Hotel adjoining he heard great names mentioned familiarly and breathed for the first time the atmosphere of national politics.

He observed with contempt the gentlemen eating oysters and sipping wine—dandified fellows with powdered hair, brilliant waistcoats and silver buckles on their shoes. Even their oaths struck him as feeble blasphemies. If they would venture into the southwestern valleys they would hear cursing with a bite to it from the mouths of settlers whose kindred were shot down by savages because the federal power failed to protect them. These smug wine-guzzlers didn't know that the best of America lay out yonder beyond the hills!

Ranging the inns he smoked many pipes, sitting alone with Indian stolidity; catching through the smoke scraps of conversation in a vocabulary more sophisticated than he was accustomed to, with foreign tongues adding to the general confusion. In the streets he saw for the first time the outward flourish of luxury—women in rich attire riding in their coaches attended by gallants in festal raiment. From these disturbing scenes he found relief in attending a militia muster,

viewing the companies of troops quartered in the city, and in conversing with farmers and drovers—rough, honest fellows he found in taverns that invited their patronage.

On the day the House convened the gentleman from Tennessee, uncertain as to the procedure, was standing awkwardly at the rear of the chamber when a young man who had been eying him with curious, friendly eyes accosted him.

"May I introduce myself?" he asked pleasantly. "I am Edward Livingston of New York. I take it you are a new member?"

"Jackson—of Tennessee. I filed my credentials when I arrived, but I don't know what else I'm to do."

"I've seen the list and your credentials are accepted. All you have to do is to present yourself at the bar of the House when your name is called and take the oath. It will give me pleasure to present you."

"I thank you, sir. It's all a new business to me and I have no colleague—I'm the first and only member from my state."

When the voice of the clerk sonorously calling the roll reached his name, Jackson advanced with the gentleman from New York attending. Jackson, a long way from Waxhaw Creek, stood by the side of Livingston to take the oath—Livingston a child of the colonial aristocracy, born in a mansion on the Hudson, graduate of Princeton, already at thirty-two distinguished by his brilliant attainments; a man habituated to the ways of drawing-rooms; by nature a diplomat, tactful, shrewd, a dangerous adversary in any test of

wits. Jackson, a child of the people, his social background the wilderness, introduced as a representative in the Congress of the United States by a man who had enjoyed the most coveted advantages of his time. There were other gentlemen of the Congress clad in home-spun, but none challenged the eye quite as imperatively as the member from the Cumberland.

The Nashville coat hung loosely on his attenuated figure. His long face, faintly marked by the smallpox suffered in the Camden prison pen, would have passed as commonplace but for the lean firm jaw and the alert blue eyes. There was something arresting in his carriage, too, the light definite step, the straight narrow shoulders, the head carried high in a way that warned the discerning that here was a man it might be well not to judge by superficial appearances.

Calling at the War Department to verify his data as to the Tennessee military claims, Jackson ran into Colonel Norton.

"A great pleasure!" the officer exclaimed cordially. "I've been away on a tour of inspection and just got home. I read of your election and was going to look you up this very day. I'm detailed here for the present and beg you to let me be of service to you in any way possible. I'll introduce you to the man in charge of the archives and you'll have no trouble getting what you want. If you're free, let us dine together and have a talk. I haven't forgotten the generous hospitality of Hunter's Hill. As I'm a bachelor living in lodgings we'll go to the Golden Cock where the ale's the best in town."

Jackson surmised from the number of gentlemen who

saluted Norton in the street and at the Golden Cock that Norton was a man of considerable distinction. When they were seated and the landlord had personally taken the colonel's order, Norton recurred again to his visit two years earlier to Nashville.

"That remains the one bright spot in my journey, thanks to you and your charming wife. I passed through the hostile Indians safely, but along the Gulf I found things unsatisfactory. There's too much Spanish spoken down that way! There's no question but Spain incites the savages to warfare on our people. And at New Orleans I learned much that is disturbing as to the future. The dogs of war are barking all over Europe and there's no telling when they may yelp on our shores."

"We should be prepared, sir! The Southwest feels keenly the indifference of the government to our danger. Jay's treaty was a blunder—a weak yielding to the British power. Having beaten the British once, we've got to be ready to do it again!"

"That's true. General Washington is finding little joy in the presidency. Even among the Federalists there are bitter jealousies. Jefferson's followers claim his Republicans are the only real democrats—I take it that your sympathies are with the Jeffersonians."

"My sympathies, sir, are with the people first and with any party that speaks for them," Jackson replied. "General Hamilton would have made a monarchy of this country."

"Any danger of that kind is passed," remarked Norton. "The Jeffersonians have some strong men you will

be meeting here. Edward Livingston of New York is one of the ablest—you have doubtless met him?"

"He's treated me with the greatest kindness," Jackson replied heartily. "I like him best of all the men I've met so far."

"And you may rely on him. There's no sham about Livingston. My father's house is near the Livingston home on the Hudson, and I have known him all my life."

Jackson recurred again to the danger of foreign encroachment.

"Oh, our government isn't asleep," said Norton. "While I apparently have a routine job at the War Department, that's only a cover, and my real business is to pick up information as to any foreign plotting that may be going on here. I don't like it, but it's a penalty I pay for having a wide acquaintance. I am even admitted to Mrs. Bingham's!"

"Bingham?" said Jackson and frowned in his ignorance of the importance of Mrs. Bingham in the affairs of the national capital.

"Women play quite a part in public affairs," said Norton, "and Mrs. Bingham is the reigning social queen. You'll meet her, of course, and Mrs. Jackson will be, I know, interested to hear of the great lady."

Jackson mumbled something that might have been interpreted as expressing his lack of interest in Mrs. Bingham and her drawing-room.

"Well," said Norton, laughing, "there's another interesting lady—a person of importance and but lately come to our shores—Lady Melderode!"

"Melderode," Jackson repeated, for the instant failing to recall where he had heard the name before.

"Yes; I told you, did I not, when I was at your house, the story about the missing lord?"

"Ah! I remember!" said Jackson.

"I told the story," continued Norton, "all along my travels—just as I told it to you and your wife. It's a good fireside yarn. But of course I got no clue anywhere and so reported when I got back here. I'd forgotten the whole thing when here comes milady his wife over the seas! The department referred her to me as the one who had made search for her husband, and we're now on very friendly terms. Perhaps you'd like to meet her?"

"I don't know that it would serve any purpose," Jackson replied indifferently. "I suppose her lost husband's as likely to be in Philadelphia or New York as anywhere."

"I hardly think so. She talks quite freely about her search, giving the impression that she's heart-broken over the loss of her lord. Suppose we pay her ladyship a brief call and then go to the theater?"

"I haven't got clothes for drawing-rooms," Jackson protested.

"Don't worry about that. She's probably tired of satin waistcoats and powdered heads. We won't let our call become tedious—I'm only interested in seeing who's there."

Feeling that it was ungracious to refuse and not without his curiosity as to the woman who had sent his friend Fowler into exile, Jackson assented.

"Her ladyship is well domiciled and evidently suffers no hardship by reason of her husband's departure into parts unknown," said Norton as they set off. "Perhaps Spain pays the bills! She has a house in a good quarter of High Street with some people of note for neighbors—including Don Carlos Yrujo, the esteemed Spanish minister."

Norton sounded the knocker on the white door of a large three-story brick house in the middle of the block, and they were admitted at once by a liveried servant.

"Mr. Representative Jackson is with me," Norton explained as the man took their coats.

The sound of laughter greeted them as the servant opened the drawing-room door.

"Colonel Norton; the Honorable Representative Jackson," he announced.

The long room, lighted by candles in a crystal chandelier and supplemented by others in sconces on the walls, touched all the senses with hints of luxurious ease. A tall young woman came toward them over the crimson carpet. To Jackson's unsophisticated eyes she was only a radiant smiling figure in white. He did not know that her gown, austerely simple as it seemed, expressed the latest fashions of Paris, where the Directory had lent its name to a new mode in woman's apparel. A fillet of pearls bound her golden hair and she carried a tiny fan. It might have seemed that she timed her step to meet the gentlemen under the chandelier the more effectively to reveal her charms.

"Ah, Colonel Norton!" Smilingly she extended her hand. "It is long since you honored me. It's well you

brought a protector with you! Mr. Representative Jackson, I am delighted to see you on your own account; Colonel Norton's introduction is unnecessary to assure your welcome."

"Always scolding me!" exclaimed the colonel with mock despair. "This is most embarrassing! I had told Mr. Jackson you were the kindest lady in the capital."

"But Mr. Jackson would never serve me as shabbily as you have. At Mrs. Bingham's only three days ago you didn't speak to me! I know Mr. Jackson would not approve of that."

"I'm sure, madam, there was some mistake," Jackson replied. "I have always found Colonel Norton most courteous."

"I'm glad the colonel has one friend! I congratulate you, Colonel!"

During this colloquy she was walking between them down the room. Jackson a little bewilderedly perceived that the Lady Melderode was only pretending to have a grievance against the colonel and that his defense of his friend had rather spoiled their byplay. He realized that he was now in a world where pretense and sham were to be expected. On the Cumberland people said what they thought and meant what they said even to the point of supporting their arguments by physical violence. But banter and equivocation might also serve a purpose; he must be on guard against his prejudices! Rachel would tell him to make the most of his opportunity to note the ways and manners of the world of fashion.

"I'm not quite desolate, you see," Lady Melderode remarked, and introduced Jackson to three young gentlemen, attachés of foreign legations, who had been standing during the reception of the newcomers. Norton already knew them and greeted them familiarly. They saluted Jackson formally, inspecting him with polite curiosity. The good manners required by their profession hardly concealed the fact that they were not greatly pleased to be interrupted by the Americans.

When they were all seated, with Lady Melderode enthroned in a fragile gilt chair somewhat apart from her callers, she addressed Jackson directly:

"You are the member from Tennessee, Mr. Jackson? Such lovely names are being added to your American geography! Tennessee is a new word to me. What is it like?"—She bent her head for a moment and then, with a graceful gesture, concluded—"like rippling water—in the moonlight—I can see it! Do you not all see it?"

"That's very pretty, madam," said Jackson, "but it's from an Indian word—Ten-asse—meaning a curved spoon. The Indians put the accent on the first syllable but I think it's prettier as you say it."

"I thank you, sir!" she said half mockingly. "I will leave it to all you gentlemen if it isn't necessary to speak the syllables evenly, as I do, to get the ripple." She lifted the fan to her lips as she pondered. "Ah! as if playing a pretty tune on the pipes of Pan."

She smilingly demanded their approval and admiration of her cleverness.

Jackson, unfamiliar with classical lore, caught up the word.

"Pan? You mean a pan to go with the spoon?"

"How very droll! You have a very pretty wit, Mr. Representative Jackson!"

The young diplomats, uncertain whether the strange gentleman was consciously punning, gave him the benefit of the doubt and laughed. Lady Melderode suspected that his joke had been unintentional and tactfully turned the talk away from ancient fables into the real world across the mountains which, she remarked, they must all wish to know.

"I suppose Tennessee is vast, like all your other provinces—states, or whatever you call them——"

"It would make a mighty kingdom, madam, if we indulged in such things," Jackson replied.

"Indulge?" murmured Lady Melderode. "How adorably you use that word—as if kings were a luxury one took off or put on at pleasure! and in dear France how rudely they disposed of Louis! They made him quite ridiculous by removing his head! Pardon me, Citizen Remiremont,"—she turned to the dapper attaché of the French legation,—"but I sometimes suspect you are not altogether happy over the loss of your king?"

"Your ladyship is wholly mistaken," the young man retorted. "I think we manage very well without his Majesty. My only sorrow is that the American Government seems so afraid to be friendly with the representatives of France. I have been snubbed, Colonel."

"Are you holding me personally responsible for the snubbing?" demanded Norton good-naturedly. "The

antics of Citizen Genêt made your position difficult. He was far too indiscreet for diplomatic life. It's one thing to love France but quite another to prove it by fighting her enemies. But we're getting on dangerous ground! Let us be discreet. It's not for a mere American soldier to offer opinions on affairs abroad."

"Discretion! That dreadful word!" sighed Lady Melderode.

"But Lady Melderode's house is extraterritorial," remarked the British attaché. "At Mrs. Bingham's one must have a care! But it's an excellent place to listen!"

"In your Tennessee, Mr. Jackson, I hope it is not necessary to be discreet," said Lady Melderode. "I wish I might live where one's remarks would not be picked up and passed on with unfortunate and mischievous interpretations. What would you talk about in a friendly little company like this in Tennessee?"

"Crops, horses, Indian massacres! We have no interest in Europe, except where Europe may meddle in our affairs. Then, madam, we know how to shoot!"

This utterance, delivered unsmilingly, was hardly diplomatic in view of the fact that representatives of three foreign powers were among the auditors. Norton bit his lips to restrain a smile; the diplomatic trio blinked and pretended not to have heard. Lady Melderode laughed gaily.

"That's the most sensible remark I've heard in Philadelphia! All America wants is to be let alone. There you have it, gentlemen, from a representative in the national Congress!"

The British secretary now proved his fitness for a diplomatic career by referring to the circus, to which it appeared he had accompanied Lady Melderode the previous night. The deft change of subject left Jackson at sea for a moment, but his education was proceeding as to the conversational method in diplomatic circles. Wars and rumors of war were not matters for careless speech. Ricketts' circus offered apparently a subject for peaceful discussion, in which diplomats and a member of the American Congress might participate with perfect safety.

"The bareback riders—how amusing and how daring! I could never see enough of them!" exclaimed Lady Melderode.

"But you're bound to pity the horses," Jackson intervened. "You can see they've been whipped into doing their tricks."

"I can see you have a tender heart, Mr. Jackson," said Lady Melderode, instantly responsive. "How few of us think of the whippings those horses must endure before they're ready for the arena."

"A horse of mettle would never submit," Jackson continued. "Those horses at Ricketts' are tame, worn-out animals. I watched them carefully, and there's not a sound beast among them."

The foreign gentlemen feebly defended the training of animals for the circus; but the gentleman from Tennessee was evidently deeply learned in equine lore. He talked of horses with a commanding eloquence. Horses as a subject of conversation in a drawing-room clearly displeased the diplomats. Lady Melderode was amused

at their displeasure, and encouraged Jackson to go on. The young gentlemen became restless and seized the first opportunity to take their leave.

Their retirement was effected with considerable ceremony in which Norton and Jackson assisted by rising and inclining their bodies deferentially during the kissing of Lady Melderode's hand.

"You gentlemen wouldn't be so cruel as to leave me alone!"

With a graceful sweeping gesture Lady Melderode indicated her wish that Jackson and Norton should remain. She pulled a cord to summon the butler and directed that wine be served—she craved the gentlemen's opinion of her Madeira. Don Carlos had pronounced it the best in any Philadelphia cellar.

Norton explained that the gentleman whose judgment her ladyship valued so highly was Don Carlos Martinez, Marquis de Yrujo, the Spanish minister.

"I wouldn't set my opinion against that of a man with a name like that!" said Jackson, who felt more at ease now that the young gentlemen from the legations had gone. "I know nothing of wine. If you have it, madam, I would prefer whisky."

"How fortunate that I have it! Peebles, bring that ugly jug from the cellar. It is queer stuff which my grocer said was made of the Indian corn from Pennsylvania province. He insisted that no larder is complete without it. I took one sip and was ill for three days. Really, gentlemen, I thought I was poisoned!"

"It's probably some of the spirits that caused the Whisky Rebellion two years ago," laughed Norton.

"You have no feeling against liquor that has dodged the excise, have you, Jackson?"

"Not the slightest, Colonel. I think it improves the flavor."

Lady Melderode now asked to be instructed as to the ways of the Indians, and her visitors undertook to enlighten her. Indians she had seen in the Philadelphia streets, blanketed and feathered, and had been fascinated—yes; there was no other word! One day she hoped to see the red men in their homes.

Jackson's thoughts flew back to the Cumberland and the miniature Fowler carried over his heart. There was no question of the woman's identity. Her hair was dressed as in the portrait and gleamed golden in the candle-light; here were the same roguish eyes. He was startled when she said, in the indifferent indolent tone that appeared to be her habitual manner of speech:

"Colonel Norton may have told you of my sorrow —my husband's long absence—so unaccountable! It is really to find him that I am here. Some aberration caused him to leave our home in England—and we were so happy! We were the most contented married pair in the kingdom. I have thought that he may have come to America—he had so many democratic notions—and gone to your frontier."

"Yes; I mentioned the matter to Mr. Jackson when I visited him on the Cumberland several years ago," said Norton. "Your ladyship is aware that I made inquiries everywhere. I deeply regret that I was unable to find the slightest clue."

"I quite despair," she replied with a sigh. "It seems

like a hopeless quest. You will pardon me for mentioning the matter, but it is constantly in my mind. But you can understand, Mr. Jackson, my feelings. A woman's sorrow is—her sorrow! And the humiliation! That is crushing. You do understand?"

"Certainly, madam," Jackson replied.

Unskilled in dissimulation, he was uncomfortable, but any lingering fears that Norton might have suspected the identity of Fowler were set at rest. That whole scene in the law office at Nashville, where Fowler had told his story, came between the Tennessean's eyes and the woman before him. Yet this fair young creature did not look like a woman who would debase herself and ruin a good man's life. Fowler must have been wrong! As he must say something, Jackson suggested that her inquiries might yet prove fruitful.

"It is difficult for a stranger in our country to realize the great distances. It would be quite easy for a man to disappear in America. There are men of all kinds on the frontier and no one questions them as long as they behave themselves. As I remember Colonel Norton's description, your husband was hardly a man to seek refuge in rough settlements like ours. He'd be much likelier to establish himself in older parts of the country where he'd find the companionship he had been used to."

"But the eastern cities have been searched," replied Lady Melderode. "And kind Colonel Burr has himself made careful inquiries in New York."

To Jackson's relief the arrival of another caller ended speculation as to the whereabouts of Lord Melderode.

The street door closed and the butler walked the length of the room to announce another caller.

"Colonel Burr, your ladyship."

"Certainly. Show him in, Peebles."

Norton noted that Colonel Burr's arrival had been announced less formally than was the habit of the house. Lady Melderode received him seated—another departure from her habit. Jackson had seen Burr in the Senate and once had heard him speak. He was a person of distinction, a veteran of the Revolution as well as a statesman, and constantly in the public eye. Jackson, who inspected a man with the same minute scrutiny he gave a horse, was already taking the New York senator's points as he advanced quickly toward Lady Melderode. He was dressed with care to the verge of foppishness. Short of stature, he bore himself erectly with something of a soldierly air. A broad high forehead, a long thin nose, thick lips—these items Jackson had noted before the colonel reached Lady Melderode.

"How relieved I am to find you at home!" he exclaimed, bending low over her hand. "You're so gay —so many demands upon your time! You'll understand the depths of my devotion when I tell you that even now I should be at a committee meeting! And instead—I am here! Ah, Norton—I always meet you in pleasant places!"

Lady Melderode presented Representative Jackson, to whom Colonel Burr gave his hand graciously.

"Is it possible that you gentlemen have not met?" asked Lady Melderode.

"It's a pleasure to meet Mr. Jackson *here*," said Burr, whose hazel eyes brightened pleasantly as he swept Jackson with a careless friendly glance.

"You are not wholly a stranger to me, Mr. Jackson," Burr continued, "for the senators from your state have spoken of you in the warmest terms. And my good friend Livingston mentioned you the other day in a way that would give you pleasure. Ned is an old friend, and a man of genius—nothing less. Your Southwest is developing very fast and will play a most important part in the future of the nation."

"I thank you, sir," Jackson returned. "We Tennesseans are grateful to you for supporting our admission to the Union. But for you, Senator Burr, we might still be standing on the nation's door-step."

"You do me too much honor. The admission of Tennessee was inevitable. I find that we may always count on the opposition of a certain element to the expansion of the country. That region calls to me strongly. Lady Melderode, you wouldn't believe it, but I have a heart for adventure! I'm not the man of books you may think me. At the War Department the other day, Colonel Norton, your chief showed me some of the most alluring maps of newly surveyed western territory—great rivers and vast fertile plains. Enormous! When I make my grand tour, Mr. Jackson, I want to be free of public cares so that I may enjoy myself thoroughly. Toward the setting sun lies the land of romance! What other country ever had men like George Rogers Clark or Boone, the mighty Nimrod!"

"Mr. Jackson can show you just such characters on

the Cumberland," said Norton. "You and Mr. Jackson are well met; at his fireside in Tennessee I felt the nation expanding clear to the Pacific."

"And why not to Cape Horn!" Burr demanded with his engaging smile. "There is room for many empires. My friend General Hamilton has a weakness for kings, but I'm sure, Mr. Jackson, a king looking for a throne would fare rather badly in your state?"

"We'd know how to receive him, sir," Jackson replied sternly. "Our Tennesseans are the best shots in the world!"

"I dare say they are," Burr agreed. "Certainly at King's Mountain they proved it!"

"It would be very droll," Lady Melderode remarked. "A king being shot in the wilderness—like a great bear!"

In the laugh that followed Jackson and Norton took their leave. When they were in the street Norton exclaimed:

"A clever woman, Lady Melderode, with all her lazy airs!"

"Yes; she appears to be," said Jackson in a tone that dismissed Lady Melderode. It was not his way to discuss a woman—any woman—and his thoughts were playing upon Burr, as his companion was quick to see.

"You liked the little senator? The man has it in him to be popular, and when it comes to a match of wits he's the equal of the best of them. He has his weaknesses—he's a great rake and women may be his undoing."

"He's not married?" Jackson asked.

"A widower—of several years standing. He's devoted to his daughter, Theodosia, who is now about eleven and very precocious. He's the most puzzling of all the conspicuous men here. He has his eye on the presidency—and is likely to make it. He's the man Hamilton and the Federalists fear most."

"I liked Burr's ideas about the future of this country," said Jackson. "I tell you America isn't going to stop at the Mississippi! She's going to outgrow these Federalists and their little ideas and offer homes and freedom to folks who never knew what these words meant! These Federalists! As far as they're concerned America ends at the mountains!"

Norton had introduced the representative from Tennessee to Lady Melderode in the innocent belief that the frontiersman would manifest rather more than a casual interest in a titled woman. But Jackson evidently had in nowise been impressed by her ladyship. To Andrew Jackson of Hunter's Hill the exquisite creature with all her blandishments was only another woman, whom he was probably comparing to her disparagement with his dark-eyed wife!

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAVALIER IS HOMESICK

RACHEL had warned him to keep his temper, but the member from Tennessee chafed at the tedious dilatory methods of the House. He had been sent there to collect a claim of the Tennessee militiamen for their expenditures in suppressing an uprising of the Cherokees. That was the whole thing in a nutshell. He was infuriated by the contention of the government that the frontier militia shouldn't have been mobilized without authority from a secretary of war who was nearly a thousand miles away from the scene! Attempts to postpone and refer to committees increased his ire. The routine of the House was a weariness to his spirit—they were so damned long about everything! He hated the gossip and the play of petty politics.

"Patience!" Livingston smilingly advised one day when he found Jackson gloomily smoking his pipe in the corridor while a debate was in progress over the sending of ships to punish the Mediterranean pirates.

"The fools waste time!" fumed Jackson. "Instead of paying blackmail to those infamous scoundrels, we ought to send ships to blow them to hell!"

"Certainly," Livingston assented, "but the question's

up as to outfitting three frigates for that very service. There's the roll-call—let's go in and vote."

Fretting at the delays encountered in his efforts to push forward the claims, Jackson seized an opportunity to express his contempt for the Federalists. President Washington appeared before the Congress to read his last address. The irrepressible boy in Jackson thrilled to the near presence of the First Citizen of the Republic, but in the battle over the resolutions approving the address he joined zestfully with the hostile Jeffersonians. Hard blows were struck in the prolonged debate and this was much to Jackson's taste. Party lines were stiffening; the young western member knew himself now as the foe of all Federalistic pretension. Washington's address was only an excuse for a demonstration; the brick was really aimed at Mr. Hamilton and the whole brood of aristocrats.

Livingston was in the thick of the fray, supporting motions designed to save Washington's personal dignity while withholding praise of his administration. When a vote was taken the New Yorker and the Tennessean were among the twelve representatives who voted no. Accepting defeat in good part, they walked with their fellows to present the resolutions to Washington at his house in High Street. Washington, a stately figure in black velvet, received the visitors in his drawing-room and listened to the reading of the resolutions with an imperturbable countenance, his thoughts already centering upon the peace of Mt. Vernon. He looked tired and ill and Jackson was touched with pity for him.

Invigorated by his taste of partisan bitterness, the

gentlemen from Tennessee now gave strict attention to the business of collecting his state's claims. When the matter came up, a yawning Federalist moved to refer the bill to a committee. Boiling with indignation, Mr. Jackson strode down the aisle to protest against further trifling. The claims had been carefully audited; the secretary of war conceded their accuracy. The drowsy gentleman who wished to bury the bill in a committee awoke to find a pair of resolute blue eyes fixed upon him. A singular person, with his reddish hair, lean face and queer clothes, but evidently dangerous when aroused.

"Tennessee is not begging! Tennessee demands justice!" So spake the Cumberland, personified by the tall, trapper-like member whose voice quivered with emotion as he described the heroic struggles of the settlers.

Livingston supported the claims, and Mr. James Madison of Virginia, without solicitation, contributed his weighty influence. The bill passed—twenty-three thousand dollars for the Tennessee claimants; but Mr. Jackson was not elated. They were such fools to make necessary so much discussion and maneuvering! He would have gone home at once but Livingston dissuaded him, urging him to wait for the inauguration of Adams.

While he waited, the member from the Cumberland availed himself of another chance to express his dislike of the Federalists by voting against an appropriation of fourteen thousand dollars to furnish and decorate the presidential mansion under construction at Washington. A palace for the president! Unless they were

watched, Hamilton's monarchists would yet set up a king. Jackson's "No" echoed through the chamber like a rifle-shot. There was hardly fourteen thousand dollars' worth of furniture in all the homes in his district!

Jackson allayed his persistent homesickness from time to time by buying gifts for Rachel. In a jeweler's shop, he one day encountered Lady Melderode.

"You are caught, sir!" she exclaimed. "Do not let me embarrass you in the slightest! Is it some exquisite bauble for a beauty out there in Tennessee? An Indian princess, perhaps?

"I'm buying a brooch for my wife!" Jackson answered bluntly.

"Not so stern! How should I know you're a benedict? From your friendship with Colonel Norton I assumed you were a bachelor—like that most agreeable gentleman himself. Your wife—we shall see her here—some day? These are very pretty trinkets"—she glanced at the stock laid out for Jackson's inspection—"but are they not too plain? Perhaps you prefer a severe simplicity in such things?"

"I prefer the best my purse can pay for," he replied stolidly.

"Tra, la, la! I had expected you to ask my advice as to a choice! But you're not like other men. Sentiment! Yes; I see you have the sentiment that comes from the contemplation of your glorious hills and streams. Not for you to permit another woman to assist in buying a gift for your wife!"

She smiled at her own perspicacity. Jackson, holding his hat,—he had discarded his coonskin cap in deference to the ways of city folk,—was wholly courteous, but his ill-concealed impatience amused Lady Melderode. She saw in him a new species; and—possibly—he might be of use!

"Every one will be going to the coronation—inauguration, should I say?—of the new president," she went on, "and I judge that it will be a spectacle—something not to be missed! I had been hoping that some one—one of my young friends of the legations, or the dear Colonel Norton, would—possibly——"

She broke off, assumed a look of perplexity and with a little shrug seemed to dismiss the matter. Jackson, unlearned in social sophistry, nevertheless knew what was wanted and met the situation.

"Would you like me to take you?" he demanded.

She laughed and her roguish look as of a child caught in some misdemeanor reminded him vividly of the face in Fowler's miniature.

"Now you hate me!" she exclaimed, her eyes and lips combining in an effulgent smile. "It's hardly fair to take advantage of any one so kind!"

"It's not a matter of kindness, madam. You wish to see the ceremony, and I'll do my best to provide you with a seat."

"But I prefer to see a kindness in it. If I were equally generous—and merciful—I would now refuse the offer I dragged out of you; but I really wish to go and I shall be proud of your escort."

"You needn't be proud of it—I would do the same

for any other man or woman if I had the opportunity."

"Incorrigible! No one else ever made me feel so humble! When you were at my house I realized that you were an original—and I worship originality! Those young gentlemen you met there are so insipid in comparison. Even Colonel Norton conforms—yes! and I find him flavorless. But you, sir! you carry the great woodlands with you and I find you most refreshing! You are the first American I have met, Mr. Representative Jackson!"

"I am a farmer from Tennessee," he retorted. But he was pleased in spite of himself.

She motioned to the shopkeeper, who had withdrawn while the elegantly attired young woman and the tall man in the rough greatcoat finished their talk. Lady Melderode dispatched her business in a few words—it had reference to the replacing of a catch in a chain. But before she left she turned again to Jackson.

"If you repent I shall understand," she said mischievously. "Otherwise you call for me——?"

"At eleven, madam. And I suggest that you be prompt."

"You give orders like a general! I shall be waiting, sir—and we will drive in my own coach!"

She made him a curtsy and with her leisurely step left the place, the shopkeeper running into the street to open the door of her carriage. Jackson, returning to the matter of his purchase, remembered what she had said about the simplicity of the brooches he had been inspecting and doubled the amount he had expected to spend.

Rachel, at Hunter's Hill, should not be the recipient of a gift which had been looked upon with disdain by Lady Melderode!

On the day appointed he performed the office of escort to her ladyship quite as if she were some woman of the frontier whom he had undertaken to guard on a journey through the wilderness. When she fluttered into the drawing-room where he stood with his great-coat buttoned about his austere figure, she laughed outright.

"Undaunted! You're going through with it! O man of the wilderness—I never doubted you would come!"

With a change of manner she brought herself close to him, touched him lightly on the shoulder.

"You fear nothing! Neither devil nor woman! That is written, sir, in your blue eyes. In Scotland I have seen men like you—stubborn, relentless—yet I'll swear you had an Irish mother! The signs are unmistakable—cruel where you hate—but—tender and true where you love."

"I believe, madam," said Jackson with a sweep of his arm toward the door, "I believe that you wish to see Mr. Adams take the oath!"

He chose to sit with her rather than among his fellow representatives and had asked the sergeant-at-arms to hold seats for him.

"You see! The show is worth while, after all," murmured Lady Melderode as the company assembled. And Jackson, too, was not without his interest in the successive tableaux as they were disclosed.

"The dear Don! How imposing!—like a fat little parrot!" her ladyship exclaimed as the Spanish minister arrived, carrying jauntily a hat adorned with a white plume and wearing a sword with a jeweled hilt.

The chief actors appeared at intervals as if to add by effective entrances to the suspensive interest of the drama. Shouts of the multitude in the street announced the distinguished arrivals. Washington walked down the aisle quickly, and at his appearance the assemblage arose. Jefferson followed a few minutes later, straight as a pine in his blue coat, and took his place on the rostrum. His silver shoe-buckles were making their last appearance, as they were soon to be replaced with leathern strings as more becoming in the foot-gear of the people's protagonist!

Less impressive than the two Virginians, John Adams arrived, his bald pate glowing. In a plum-colored coat with its high collar reaching far up his short neck, he gave an impression of having been stuffed into his raiment. But he was the man of the hour and not without his sense of the ceremonial demands of the occasion. He read his address with impressive deliberation. When he referred to Washington he bowed to the grave chieftain while all the assemblage stood. When he concluded he took the oath from Ellsworth, the black-robed Chief Justice, and the page turned to a new chapter in American history.

"Poor, dear General Washington," said Lady Melderode, touching her handkerchief to her eyes as the retiring president left the chamber.

The member from Tennessee, who had followed the

ceremony with grave attention, was thinking that on the frontier people were going about their tasks confident that the passing of one leader and the elevation of another to power meant no interruption to the orderly processes of government. Far through the future a succession of men would reach the highest place, serve the people and step back into private life as Washington had done.

"And now we must say President Adams," remarked Lady Melderode as they drove through the streets. "You seem rather *triste,* Monsieur Jackson." Seeing that he did not understand, she repeated; "You seem unhappy. It will be the way of your people to shuffle their great men about. It seems very cruel. The king is dead! Long live the king!"

"The king," Jackson retorted, "is the people and lives for ever!"

When they reached the house he refused her invitation to remain for dinner.

"But you will linger for one of your American toddies? My jug of fire-water is for you alone. No? In what way can I repay you, sir, for your courtesy?"

"Where there is no debt, no payment is necessary. It has been a pleasure, madam, to serve you."

"And you have done it most graciously. One day *you* may be president—is it not possible for all Americans?"

"My ambitions do not reach so high," he said with a laugh, and refusing her tender of the waiting coach, set off for town.

The door had opened to her knock, but she stepped

out of the entry and for a moment watched him as he stalked up the street with his determined stride.

Jackson was at breakfast in the City Tavern a few days after the inauguration when Norton joined him.

The Tavern was no substitute for the order and peace of Hunter's Hill. From the windows of his small bedroom he was able to contemplate nothing more inspiring than a brick wall, which was an offense to eyes habituated to the long vistas of the Tennessee hills.

His homesickness became unbearably poignant whenever he sat down to breakfast in the ill-lighted refectory, with its reek of stale pipe-smoke. He missed Rachel's heartening smile across the table, which was never lacking even on stormy winter mornings when they breakfasted by candle-light. And the best city food he had tasted was savorless compared with the fare at Hunter's Hill. The tavern ham was green and the corn bread an abomination! Much as he liked Norton, he was not greatly pleased to see him at this trying hour, and he was not wholly successful in concealing his displeasure.

"Good morning, Jackson! Sorry to be seeing so little of you," remarked the officer affably. "I've been unusually busy or I'd have looked you up. But I saw you at the inaugural ceremonies in very attractive company! There wasn't a woman there who looked a whit handsomer than her ladyship!"

"Do you want to know how I came to take her?" Jackson demanded testily. "I met her in a store where I was doing some trading and she hinted that she'd

like to see the show. I invited her because that seemed decenter than refusing."

"My dear Jackson! Do pardon me! I wasn't criticizing! I didn't mean to be impertinent!"

"I know you didn't but I don't want you to get the wrong idea about it."

"Knowing her ladyship, I surmised just how it had happened," Norton replied, chagrined that he had failed to gage the Tennessean's sensitiveness.

"I hope I didn't violate any rules by taking a woman to the inauguration," Jackson persisted. "Other members did it."

"Why, of course it was perfectly proper and most kind and courteous. And so John Adams is president! From what I hear he's not likely to have a happy time of it. I hope when the capital's moved to that mudhole on the Potomac they've chosen for it there'll be less gossip and lying than we have here."

"This place," declared Jackson fiercely, "is like a filthy stable; I don't like the smell of it. I'd be out of it now only I found a man, David Allison by name, who wants to buy some Tennessee land. I've been waiting for him to decide what he wants to do. You know Allison?"

"Yes; slightly—he's a man of good standing and reputed to be wealthy. I shouldn't think you'd want to sell any of your land when it's bound to appreciate."

"I want to make some money," Jackson announced. "I've got all I want of politics and when I get back to Tennessee I'll be damned if I ever leave home again."

"But you're just the sort of man we need in the Con-

gress! You've already attracted favorable attention by your handling of those military claims. And the friendliness of such men as Ned Livingston and Jimmy Madison is worth having. You fit right in with the anti-Federalist leaders who share your views about the rights of the people and the future of the country."

"They're bound to make a mess of it," said Jackson with a scowl. "If I don't finish my trade with Allison mighty soon, I'm going to quit."

Norton groped for some clue to the workings of the mind of this virile, blunt-spoken young man from the Cumberland, who seemed so little impressed by his association with the nation's lawmakers. Every other man he knew was eager for promotion and power, but this singular Jackson, at a time when any hour might bring a tremendous crisis in international relationships, was impatient to escape across the hills to the peace of his farms. He would have thought that a man of Jackson's character would rejoice in the impending battles over questions of vital importance to the country.

But as Jackson settled back in his chair and filled his pipe Norton caught a gleam. Jackson was, above all else, the lover, eager to return to the wife in whom all his thought centered. Norton had been deeply touched by the devotion of the two as he had seen them in their home and he remarked with all kindness:

"I know what's the trouble with you, Jackson. You're homesick for Hunter's Hill and the lovely woman you left there!"

Jackson took the pipe from his lips and a look of great tenderness came into his eyes.

"You've hit the truth, Norton—there's nothing I want in all the world but just to live out yonder—at home—with *her*. This life down here is not for me; I've got to go home! I'm sorry I spoke sharply to you when you came in, but that Melderode woman represents everything I hate. But she's a woman, and it's struck me a long time ago that we men have the best of it in this world. If a woman's bad, by God, I'm not for kicking her into the road!"

"Well, except for a little very quiet gossip hereabouts, we have no right to assume that Lady Melderode isn't a good woman. Either she left her husband or he left her and I don't know that it's any of our business which way it was."

"If she couldn't get on with her husband she ought to stay at home with her mother!" said Jackson. "And she ought to find something better to do than entertain such young jackasses as we saw in her parlor."

Norton smiled and Jackson, fearing that he wasn't making himself clear, elaborated his views.

"Women," he said, "ought to stay at home with their families, or their friends—or somebody who's responsible for 'em! When women begin running loose they're bound to get into mischief. I don't like the ways of these people down here. I'm sick of the whole damned place."

With his thoughts hovering over Hunter's Hill, Jackson refused an invitation to dine with Livingston, and other friendly overtures from fellow members of the House who appreciated his good qualities and wished to cultivate his further acquaintance. But he was going

home! If these men didn't understand that a man might prefer the simple joys of the planter's life to the strife of the capital, he couldn't help it; he was going home to Rachel! He was courteous in his refusals of hospitality, but he was not only going home, he was never coming back!

And so he rode out of Philadelphia with his pack-horse laden with gifts for Rachel, resolved that henceforth the affairs of the nation could be managed very well without his assistance.

CHAPTER XV

A LESSON IN GOOD MANNERS

AT EASE on the veranda at Hunter's Hill he gave Rachel a full account of his adventures. Not flattering was his estimate of most of the men who were carrying on the affairs of the government. He thanked God that the mountains lay between the Cumberland and the intrigue, suspicion and hatred that pervaded the Philadelphia atmosphere.

He was eager for home news and gave close attention to her recital of births, deaths and marriages, Indian depredations, the coming of new settlers, the affairs of her mother's family. She gave a report in detail of the homely history of Hunter's Hill in his absence; the health of the slaves, the condition of the stock; the brilliant promise of a young mare she had been training.

"I don't think you've missed me much here," he remarked. "Everything around the plantation's in better shape than when I left home."

"Not missed you! I never was so lonesome in my life! I went many times down the road just to stand for a little bit at that place where I told you good-by. As far as the plantation's concerned I've had plenty of help. Brother Sam and Bob Hays have been mighty good to me, and Mr. Fowler dropped in half a dozen

times to see if I needed anything. He seems more content than I ever thought he'd be. He's joined the militia and gone out on two or three calls against the Indians. All the folks in the settlement like him—he's so kind to everybody. I suppose there's no danger of his wife ever finding him here."

"Well, I'm not so sure about that! That's part of my Philadelphia story. It's pretty serious and I've been worried about it ever since I came home. I don't know what to do but I'd like to get your idea. I saw Fowler's wife in Philadelphia!"

"You saw her! Oh, I hope she's not going to make trouble for him!"

"She talked about him as if she was interested in finding him, but of course I told her nothing. I couldn't tell whether she wanted to make trouble for him or was looking for him in the hope he'd take her back."

Rachel listened with deepest interest as he told of his meeting with Lady Melderode, throwing in questions from time to time to encourage the elaboration of his descriptions of her ladyship's house, dress, manners and speech.

To the simple-hearted Rachel her husband's Philadelphia experience was like a fairy-tale. What he had said of statesmen and public affairs interested her little, but such glimpses as he had had of the social picture and now his detailed account of Lady Melderode opened new vistas to her imagination.

"Does she sing?" she asked.

"She didn't sing to me!"

"Does she ride?"

"I didn't see her ride!"

Jackson laughed, knowing that his home-keeping Rachel was measuring herself and her accomplishments against those of the titled lady in Philadelphia. He got up and took her face between his hands and gazed fondly into her eyes.

"She couldn't sing like you—no woman could! And she couldn't ride like you—or do any of the things you do better than any other woman on earth—my beauty, my dearest! That woman's a pretty bird that twitters very sweetly in her little cage and a cage is the right place for her. It makes me mad to think she could break the heart of a man like John Fowler."

"But as to telling Mr. Fowler you saw her——"

"There's the question! If I thought he'd been mistaken and misjudged her and if she really loved him, of course I'd tell him. But I believe none of those things now that I've seen her. This pretended search for him may cover some other motive for coming to America. Maybe she was uncomfortable in England and there was scandal about her that caused her to leave. That woman's not going to sit still anywhere. Now that she's got the bit in her teeth she's going to run considerable."

"I hope she doesn't run this way," said Rachel soberly. "We don't want anything to happen to make Mr. Fowler unhappy. But of course such a fine lady wouldn't ever come out here. She wouldn't like our country ways."

"I'm not so sure about that. She's chuck-full of—what you call 'em—romantic ideas?—about the In-

dians. Little she knows what a dirty lot of thieves and scoundrels they are! But she might get restless and come out to look for Indian princesses. It would be like her!"

"Well, she'd soon wear herself out at that. From what you tell me she's the kind that wants luxuries. The poor lady!" exclaimed Rachel, with sincere feeling. "I'm sure if she did her husband a wrong she's sorry for it now. It might be that he'd forgive her."

"I don't believe it; the knife went too deep. It wasn't just his wife's conduct—it was that whole way of life over there in Europe he ran away from. I got a smell of what it's like in Philadelphia and you can't blame a man like him for getting out of it. It's all artificial; nothing honest or decent about it."

"He's happy here," said Rachel. "And he's got us to look after him. Sister Jane and Bob are mighty fond of him; he's over at their place almost every day."

"Well, I feel a good deal toward that man as I might toward a brother if I had one," Jackson remarked thoughtfully. "We won't tell him I've seen his wife. No good could come of it anyhow, and it would only trouble him just when he's beginning to feel at home out here. He might leave and we don't want to lose him. I'll never tell him; that's settled. I hope he'll never have to see her again."

Through the summer Jackson found many outlets for his energies. An increasing number of clients sought counsel in the cabin law-office. He and Overton held title to twenty-five thousand acres of land and Jackson was constantly selling and trading. But he found the

greatest happiness in developing the acres that lay along the Cumberland at Hunter's Hill. He built a ferry, more in a spirit of good neighborliness than for profit. No man in the district carried on so many enterprises. Rachel viewed these activities with relief, believing the very multiplicity of his occupations would divert him from politics.

A summons came to return forthwith to Philadelphia for a special session of the Congress to consider the prospect of war with France. Receiving it at Hunter's Hill, he held it up for Rachel's inspection and seeing the look of consternation in her face he laughed and tore it across.

"Catch me down there to listen to those imbeciles!"

"Don't you have to go?" she asked, taking the fragments of the summons and eying them with awe.

"I'd like to see 'em drag me there! If there's going to be war I'll be *here*—ready to march with Tennessee!"

She listened with misgivings as he discussed the possibility of assault upon Tennessee from the south and was amazed that he had evidently given so much thought to the defense of the southwestern waterways. War would be a greater danger to the peace of Hunter's Hill than the animosities of politics!

From Hays, Overton and Fowler and through her mother, who took the liveliest interest in public affairs, she began to hear that Tennessee was not yet satisfied to discharge her efficient, straight-thinking husband from further public service. His success with difficult undertakings was becoming an axiom. There was a

lifting of heads whenever his horse bore him at a gallop into Nashville. In the stores and taverns, at militia muster and on court days Jackson was the man most favored for future preferment. Sevier, Blount and Robertson and others of the pioneers were growing old, but Jackson was equally brave and with all the appeal of vigorous young manhood.

Hays and Overton, with the solicitude of warm friendship, conferred upon a rumor that Jackson was looked upon as a likely contender for a seat in the United States Senate.

"But he swears by all that's holy he'll not run!" exclaimed Hays. He and Overton were riding into town after a day spent in inspecting horses at Hunter's Hill, where politics had not been mentioned.

"Not run!" exclaimed Overton. "Why, Andy's got to be in a fight or he'd die. Anything that means contest stirs his blood—rooster-fight, horse-race, shooting match, it's all the same to him. If somebody'd give him the senatorship he wouldn't take it, but if it's a question of fighting for it—he'll go in—and win!"

"He wouldn't like the senatorship if he got it," said Hays. "And Rachel doesn't say anything, but she wants him to keep out of politics."

"And strangely enough, Andy thinks himself that he wants to keep out! But he lives on excitement; he's got to have new experiences. He's thinking a lot about war and he's got his eye fixed on the generalship of the militia."

"But Sevier will stop him there. The old man's outwardly friendly with Andy, but Andy's cocksure ways

exasperate him. Sevier's been the big chief too long to give up to a younger man without a fight."

"I hope Andy won't get into a row with him, for Sevier has friends aplenty. The men who fought with him at King's Mountain would die for him. There's always a houseful of his old soldiers at his place on the Nolichucky. He's the big man of East Tennessee. Sevier and Andy are a good deal alike. Both are born fighters! But either one of 'em would make any sacrifice to help a friend."

With no aim in life but to promote her husband's happiness, Rachel found herself helpless to deal with the mood that now settled upon him. She mothered him, looked carefully to his comfort and bore with him patiently in his protracted silences. On days that he spent at home she watched him striding across the pastures as if bent on urgent business, swinging a stick, with the hounds at his heels. He did not tell her at once of his decision to become a candidate for the Senate but merely announced it as if it were a disagreeable duty that had been forced upon him.

The destiny, spiteful or beneficent, that had driven him over the hills to the Cumberland still dominated his life inexorably. Against his resolve never to repeat his experience as a lawmaker, he was overcome by a fierce desire to win this contest for the senatorship. Winning it, he was confronted again by the necessity for leaving home. The second parting with Rachel was no less poignant than the first. By his own act he had got into the thing and now he must go through with it, but he rode away without zest for his new adventure.

Livingston, welcoming Jackson cordially, chaffed him upon his elevation to the Upper House.

"I thought you'd quit the public service for all time! But I see you only went home for promotion. I wish you'd tell me how you managed it. Stepping right into the Senate! By Jove! I'm lucky to hang on in the Lower House!"

"We can't let the mountain end of our state have all the jobs," said Jackson. "I'd be glad to trade the honor for a good running horse."

"We've had a feverish time since you left. It's too bad Europe won't behave till we get our government machinery running."

"We're going to have to lick a few of those foreign powers to teach 'em to leave us alone. They've got to learn they'll burn their damned fingers if they touch America!"

Roused at the thought of a fight, the speculations and whispered predictions about the taverns only angered him. Before he had taken the oath of his new office he wished himself home!

Livingston, warmly attached to the irascible Tennessean, went into the Senate chamber from time to time and saw Jackson during the long debates glowering and fidgeting impatiently in his chair like a restive schoolboy. But socially he proved to be far more tractable than on his first visit to Philadelphia. If the Senate was a bore, it was a relief to dine in lively company; and there were houses like Livingston's, where gossip was discouraged and matters of real moment were discussed with knowledge and wisdom.

Always alert lest some aristocrat treat him with condescension, Jackson found that the Livingstons and their friends accepted him as a man whose right to social consideration was as good as another's. In fact, he found himself in these more intellectual groups an object of special attention, not as a senator, but because he was of the far frontier, the founder of a state, who brought to brilliant tables hints of the energy and power that lay beyond the mountains.

"Your friend has a grand air that is overpowering," Mrs. Livingston remarked to her husband. "There's something almost kingly about the man. When he comes into the drawing-room it seems to grow bigger and the air freshens. He speaks of his home as if it were a royal palace and of his wife as if she were a queen."

"You touched the right subjects to win his favor—home and his wife. Confound the man! I can't make out what his aims and ambitions really are! He's too impatient and downright, flaring at any hint of compromise, to make a success in politics. But his very defects may have a value if he cares to go ahead."

"It delights me to see you showing him off, Ned! Have a care lest he see what you're up to! You'd think such a man, coming out of the wilderness, would be awed by social functions. But he carries himself like a perfect gentle knight to the manner born."

"Not always so gentle! He told Mrs. Liston at our house America would whip England again if it was necessary, and his tone implied a hope the necessity would arise! A fine speech to make the wife of the British

envoy! But Mrs. Liston is so given to undiplomatic language herself that she liked it. By the way—something's amiss between Lady Melderode and the Listons. They received her very cordially when she first arrived in Philadelphia, but it's now whispered they've ceased to vouch for her."

"You can hear anything about anybody if you keep the window open," Mrs. Livingston replied carelessly. "And an unattached woman, particularly one with a distinguished name, can't hope to escape criticism. But I must say she makes herself ridiculous giving out the impression that she's in America looking for her husband."

"We needn't bother our heads over her; there's enough scandal abroad about some of our Americans without borrowing from our English cousins. To return to Senator Jackson, I have promised Mrs. Bingham to produce him in her drawing-room—when is she receiving next—to-morrow evening? She wants to add him to her list of celebrities. I wonder if we can deliver him there!"

"Tell him he has to go. He could have a social career if he cared for it. I suppose there's no danger of turning his head?"

"Not Jackson's! I suspect him of having an honest contempt for all the frivolity he sees hereabouts. Rather creditable to him. But nothing could frighten or awe him—not even the ghost of Julius Cæsar!"

Senator Jackson, of Hunter's Hill, convoyed by the Livingstons, duly appeared at the proper hour in Mrs. William Bingham's drawing-room. Mrs. Bingham held

Philadelphia society in the hollow of her hand. Her spacious home on Third Street, surrounded by handsome gardens, was indeed the center of fashionable life for the republic. This was Jackson's first contact with magnificence, but after a swift survey of the great drawing-room with its elaborate furnishings he unconcernedly turned his attention upon the company in fashionable apparel who had already assembled.

"How kind of you to honor me, Senator Jackson!" Mrs. Bingham exclaimed. "I'm going to give you credit for bringing the Livingstons. I think Ned looks upon my house as a Federalist stronghold. I'm glad to refute the monstrous charge by displaying such distinguished democrats as you gentlemen."

"Oh, we're not alone! I see Mr. Gallatin across the room," remarked Mrs. Livingston. "And unless I'm mistaken there's Mr. Jefferson. I wonder what he's talking about to those pretty girls!"

"Weather signs or mastodons! Since dear Doctor Franklin died we've hardly another man so interested in all such queer things as Mr. Jefferson."

Jackson, not wishing to be a burden to the Livingstons, left them and pursued his own way through the rooms. If he hadn't gone to the place in an amiable mood, the frothy chatter would have irritated him. On the surface everything was peaceful at the capital of the republic. Conversation appeared to be limited to discussions of recent balls and dinners. But hints of partisan strife were not lacking. As he passed a lively group of young people a girl's voice rose impudently above the murmurous confusion of tongues, saying:

"We must not appear too gay—there are some of the filthy democrats here!"

Jackson, moving quietly on, was thinking hard. This, then, was the attitude of the powdered and perfumed American aristocrats toward the followers of Jefferson, the friends of the people!

He was not a negligible figure in the bright company. Many eyes were observing him curiously. Nobodies were not found at Mrs. Bingham's, and the tall, plainly clad young senator was presumably a person of importance or he would not be there.

A much beflounced stout lady from New York to whom he was presented asked when he would be returning to Tennessee as she wished him to bear a letter to her son, a captain in the army, who at last accounts was stationed somewhere on the shores of Lake Erie. Jackson courteously explained that the northern lakes were not on his line of march to Tennessee; but his attempts to enlighten her as to American geography only roused her ire. She declared that she thought it very foolish for people to go into the West to live and be a trouble to the government.

"That's a splendid idea, madam. We should all move out of the country and let the Indians have it again!"

Wandering into the conservatory he found Jefferson alone, gravely pondering the assembled flora.

"Good evening, Senator. I was just looking at this rose tree. It's a species I saw in France. I admire Mrs. Bingham's enterprise in importing it. The flower is very delicate and beautiful."

Jackson confessed his ignorance of all roses except

the wild varieties of the South, but Jefferson graciously made it possible for him to talk of these. Soon they were discussing agriculture and horse breeding, of which Jackson spoke with much more certainty than of roses. Other visitors to the conservatory, cocking their ears in the hope that they had caught the Virginian and the Tennessean plotting against the Federalists, were disappointed to find them discussing Arabian brood mares.

Jackson listened with absorption to the vice-president's comments on farm methods in Europe. Having seen Jefferson only from a distance in the Senate chamber, Jackson was impressed by the range of his knowledge. He hadn't known that the author of the Declaration of Independence was like this! Yet Jefferson's enemies called him a dreamer and a visionary.

Jackson was answering Jefferson's questions as to the variety of soils in Tennessee when Madison entered—a small man, nervous and with an anxious look in his eyes, who joined in the talk for a few minutes. It appeared that he had met Jefferson by prearrangement at Mrs. Bingham's and they were going later to Madison's for a conference.

They returned together to the drawing-room where Jackson, having satisfied his curiosity as to the ways of high society, began wondering how to make his escape. Dancing had begun in the ballroom and some of the older folk were taking their leave. In the dining-room food and drink were offered in abundance and it was a question whether many gentlemen and several ladies were not imbibing too freely of the liquid refresh-

ments. Mrs. Bingham, moving about to promote the comfort of her guests, met Jackson as he was seeking the Livingstons.

"Not leaving so early! I shall be grieved if you scorn my poor refreshments. You will not refuse a glass of punch—my own special concoction?"

With her hand on his arm she led the way to the library. She paused at the door to flutter her fan at a group that seemed to be permanently established around the huge silver punch-bowl.

"Colonel Burr! I might have known you'd be here. My husband rebuked me for serving punch in the library. He thinks it a most unsuitable place. Pray tell me you don't think so, Colonel Burr!"

"We will leave it to the ghosts of the authors of these works," Burr replied with a gesture toward the shelves. "They were all two-bottle men."

Jackson lifted his glass.

"Madam, your health."

"We drink to Mrs. Bingham!" said Burr. "Without her what would life be among the Quakers!"

"Mr. Jefferson thinks I'm not truly American!" Mrs. Bingham laughed. "He comes to my house but I know he disapproves. He scolds me for aping the fashions and manners of Paris. But am I not original?"

"Much more than that!" declared Burr. "You are perfect! Perfect in all ways. Ah, here are Mr. and Mrs. Liston. We now have an excuse for dipping again into this admirable punch. May we Americans not drink to our late king? There be those—all wicked Hamiltonians—who regret our change of flags."

"What! Treason in the capital?" cried Mrs. Bingham in mock horror. "I can't believe it!"

"May I not answer all such insinuations?" asked Liston gravely as he took a glass. "To the president!"

"Perhaps the president needs our prayers more than our toasts," remarked Burr dryly when the toast was drunk.

Jackson, ill at ease under their quick give and take with its blithe insincerities, was waiting for an opportunity to leave when Lady Melderode appeared, unattended. As she paused on the threshold the doorway effectively framed her. For an instant her face betrayed embarrassment and annoyance. But, at once composed, she moved forward with her graceful, gliding step as Mrs. Bingham turned to greet her.

"You arrive late, Lady Melderode; but no less welcome for that!"

"Do I intrude?" her ladyship exclaimed. "I was roaming about looking for you, to make my compliments, and stumbled in here—by chance. Colonel Burr —Senator Jackson——" To the rest she gave an impersonal, inclusive smile. The others resumed their talk and she turned to Jackson, gracefully extending her hand. "You left us a humble representative—and came back a senator! I'm sure you deserved the promotion. Merit rewarded—the affection of your people! My congratulations, sir!"

He was aware that Lady Melderode's entrance had caused a distinct change in the atmosphere. A slight turning of the shoulders of several of the women in the group at the punch-bowl expressed disapproval of Lady

Melderode. Burr, as if understanding what was forward, lounged across the room to where Mrs. Bingham, Lady Melderode and Jackson were standing.

"We have just drunk to his Majesty, your king, Lady Melderode," he remarked. "You should not be deprived of that pleasure."

"Thank you, Senator Burr," Lady Melderode replied indifferently, "but my patriotism needs no stimulant."

Mrs. Bingham, past mistress of all the social arts, played nervously with her fan. Mrs. Liston was engaged in the somewhat difficult evolution of passing a group that included Lady Melderode without seeing her. Liston, glass in hand, was pretending absorption in the remarks of the wife of the secretary of his legation. His absorption was so great at the moment that he failed to read the obvious signal of Mrs. Liston that he was to follow her.

Lady Melderode, talking composedly, smiled at the envoy's evident irritation at the clumsiness with which his spouse was trying to get him out of the room. The spectators of the little comedy were all talking spiritedly to conceal the fact that Great Britain's envoy and his wife were pointedly refusing to recognize their countrywoman. The question of taste projected by the episode was the more interesting from the fact that previously Lady Melderode had been received with evident cordiality by the members of the British legation. Liston, no longer able to ignore his wife's impatience as she waited at the door, now started toward her.

"Mr. Liston." It was Lady Melderode, speaking in

her accustomed deliberate fashion; but her voice had the effect of silencing all other speech. The abrupt cessation of the music in the ballroom added an emphasis to the tense quiet.

Liston, hesitating as his name was spoken, turned toward the speaker with the slightest inclination. This perhaps satisfied all the requirements and he continued with dignified step toward the door.

"Pardon me—Mr. Liston?"

Lady Melderode's even, mellow tones changed to an inquiry what had begun as a challenge. The envoy, feigning preoccupation, and with his wife's eyes drawing him on, had all but effected his exit when his name was again spoken, but now in a voice harsh and preemptory.

"Lady Melderode addressed you, sir," said the senator from the Cumberland. "You will speak to Lady Melderode!"

Some one at the punch-bowl dropped a glass which bounced on the carpet and hopped idiotically, as if rejoicing in the general discomfiture. Liston, his face afire, swung round to find Jackson's gaze fixed sternly upon him.

"I am very happy to see you, Lady Melderode," said the envoy, and the room breathed again.

The Livingstons, entering from the rear, had heard Jackson's command and the minister's reply. The other witnesses of the scene were slowly withdrawing, silently, as if they had been viewing a corpse.

"I thank you, Senator Jackson," said Lady Melderode calmly. "Mrs. Bingham, I greatly regret that this

should have occurred in your house. May I trouble you to have a servant call my carriage?"

The Livingstons asked no questions, but Jackson, feeling that some explanation was due them, related in a few sentences what had happened.

"I ought to have kept my mouth shut, but the way that man acted made me mad clean through! I'm sorry, but the fat's in the fire and I reckon it'll have to sizzle. You brought me here, and I hope Mrs. Bingham won't blame you because I made a row."

"You acted like a gallant gentleman, Mr. Jackson," said Mrs. Livingston warmly. "The offense wasn't yours but the Listons'. It's the rule that we must treat our bitterest enemies courteously in a friend's house. The minister had no right to make other people uncomfortable. In their position the Listons could very easily have let Lady Melderode know they didn't care for her further acquaintance. To cut her in a place like this was unpardonable bad manners."

"I suspect," said Jackson with a grin, "she followed the Listons in here just to make a fuss."

"Probably," Mrs. Livingston replied.

"Of course Lady Melderode shouldn't have forced the matter," remarked Livingston judicially. "She was very foolish to risk it, knowing that the Listons, for reasons that don't concern us, have stopped asking her to their house."

"Well, you were quite the hero of the occasion," said Mrs. Livingston. "The other men were so frightened it was comical. Even Colonel Burr's usual tact failed him and for the first time in her life Mrs. Bingham was

embarrassed. You may be sure she'll always be grateful to you for saving the situation. You fired the pistol and cleared the air."

"That's the truth of it," said Livingston. "You acted with perfect propriety. But"—he smiled broadly—"do you mind telling me what would have happened if Liston hadn't stopped when you spoke to him?"

"What would I have done?" Jackson demanded. "I'd have cut off his ears and sent 'em to his king!"

CHAPTER XVI

HARD TIMES

HIS social adventures were not interesting enough to overcome the Tennessee senator's growing restlessness. Rachel refused to join him in Philadelphia with the justifiable excuse that the plantation required her attention. Toward the end of February he was again harassed by homesickness which neither the tensity of the political situation nor the diversions of metropolitan life allayed. He was cramped, stifled, depressed by the city, and the only relief he found was in mounting a horse and riding madly into the country. Galloping along the Schuylkill he planned a broadening of his undertakings at home. He was in the toils of a new ambition—he would make money!

The negotiations he had opened the previous winter with Allison the merchant were renewed. Allison was slow in his bargaining but finally concluded an arrangement by which he was to pay seven thousand dollars for a large tract of Jackson's far-rolling acres. Cash was scarce but as Allison was a man of excellent credit Jackson accepted notes.

He was possessed now by a new idea; he would exchange the notes for a stock of merchandise and go home and set up a store. The trading and the planning necessary to put the idea into execution were a relief

from the tedious sessions of the Senate. It was not his way to seek advice and he was thoroughly committed to the sale and had endorsed the notes to the merchants from whom he was buying his goods before he confided his plans to Livingston.

"If you'd asked me in the first instance I'd have said not to do it," said the New Yorker. "These are hard times and if Allison fails to pay the notes the burden will be on you."

"Oh, I'm taking the chance. Tennessee's growing fast and the people have got to have supplies. I'll give the thing a trial."

To Livingston, absorbed in the intensification of partisan antagonisms, and with America's relations with France approaching a crisis, it was incredible that a member of the Senate should be leaving the capital to open a shop in the wilderness. The Jeffersonians needed just such a fellow as Jackson, who, in spite of his irascibility and impatience, had a genius for seeing things straight. Livingston was not surprised when, in April, Jackson rose in the Senate and asked for a leave of absence.

Once again Jackson was going home! Astride a mettlesome horse, he turned his face westward, thanking God as he sniffed once more the odor of plowed earth sweetened by spring rain. Arriving at Pittsburgh, he inspected his merchandise and saw it loaded into barges. As he floated down the Ohio the storm broke in the Congress over the report of the American embassy to France. But it was nothing to Andrew Jackson of Hunter's Hill that Talleyrand had attempted to black-

mail America and that the X.Y.Z. letters that revealed the shameful story were before the Senate.

With his long legs comfortably extended on a lumbering keel-boat he smoked his pipe contentedly. Spring lay upon the Ohio Valley; the world was beautiful to look upon and he was on his way to Hunter's Hill and Rachel.

He reached home ahead of the letter announcing his purpose to quit the capital and Rachel was amazed to see him flinging himself from his horse, shouting hearty greetings to the negroes, who ran to meet him with joyous cries.

Rachel, amazed and mystified, asked at once whether he were ill, taking his face in her hands to seek the answer.

"Sound as hickory timber! Never felt better! The river trip gave me a fine rest! Thank God! I'm here! A thousand horses couldn't haul me away!" He held her close in his arms, her tears of happiness warm on his cheek. "You cry when I go and cry when I come! This time I'm home to stay."

"But you're still a senator—you'll have to go back again." She clung to him, afraid to believe that he wouldn't leave her again.

"I'm home on leave—but I'm never going back! My first business will be to resign."

"But, my dearest one, will the people like that?" she asked soberly. "When you take a place like the senatorship they'll feel you ought to keep it."

But she did not press the matter, fearing to shake his determination to remain with her. He was already

telling her enthusiastically of his new project. The barges with his stock of goods would soon be at the Nashville wharf. He would set up the store in a blockhouse at Clover Bottom, on Stone's River, within easy reach of Hunter's Hill.

"I'm going to take Coffey and Hutchings into partnership so I can attend to my law practise. You're a master hand at running the plantation and I don't need to worry about that. I want money so I can give you a better house, where you can live as a girl like you ought to live. I got all of Philadelphia I could stand and now I can thank God every morning I don't have to live down there among fools and liars."

Rachel had never seen him so happy as now. He had no difficulty in infecting Coffey and Hutchings with his sanguine expectations as to the rich rewards to be won at Clover Bottom. They would build boats to carry the cotton, corn, wheat and furs they accepted in exchange for cloth, farm implements, salt and whisky and establish important trading connections with Natchez and New Orleans.

He was so enchanted with his prospects that he had been at home several weeks before Rachel was able to extract from him the story of his second adventure in Philadelphia. One evening when he had been repeating some of Jefferson's suggestions about horse breeding, he began telling her of Mrs. Bingham's party and of his encounter with the British minister.

When she began praising him for going to Lady Melderode's assistance he stopped her with the declaration that it was a serious question whether he hadn't made a fool of himself.

"The best thing for me to do is to stay here with you where I won't get mixed up in the rows of these soft-handed people. Fashionable folks don't have our ideas; that woman ought to have stayed at home anyway and not exposed herself to insult. What riled me was the way that fellow Liston tried to sneak out of the room without noticing her. I guess," he added with a chuckle, "he'll be more cautious about playing deaf hereafter!"

His description of Mrs. Bingham's mansion and the distinguished company that had gathered there sent Rachel's thoughts flying into a new field of speculation. In her simple reasoning she was afraid that his very devotion to her might hamper him; for since their first meeting she had never been free of the feeling that he was destined to a great place in the world. And sweet as it was to know that he preferred his home with her on the frontier to a seat in the nation's councils, she had her misgivings. Seeing her preoccupation, he demanded to know what was troubling her.

"I was thinking—I was just thinking," she began slowly, "that if you hadn't married me you could do a lot of things you don't do just because you're so good to me. I'm afraid you ought to have stayed down there. In a little while you'd learn to get on with those folks. It seems selfish to hold you here."

He grasped her shoulders and shook her gently.

"If you talk like that I'll begin to doubt you love me!"

He bent over her, stroking her cheeks, looking into her eyes, waiting for her strong round arms to steal about his neck.

The honeysuckle bloomed over the veranda at Hunter's Hill and the fragrance of Rachel's flower garden scented the air on the summer evenings like an incense to the spirit of peace and contentment. Happy were the two lovers as they rode over the plantation or sat on the veranda contemplating the fulfilment of all their dreams. Their hopes soared to the stars. After long silences, he would touch her hand, call her endearing names.

He bought a large tract of land to get the building he wanted for the store and with it he acquired a stretch of smooth turf along Stone's River, which his discerning eye had marked as an admirable place for a race-course. Sentiment had entered into the purchase of the land, for it had belonged to Rachel's father and by acquiring it he had established a new tie with the Donelson clan.

He was now a country gentleman with many acres under tillage; farming and horse breeding were his real vocations; the law and storekeeping were incidental. He read newspapers voraciously and wrote many letters,—to acquaintances in the Congress,—epistles erratic as to spelling but vigorous and resolute in content. Not without his vanity, he reflected, sometimes as he surveyed his possessions, that he hadn't done so badly. He was thirty-one. He had eaten the bitter bread of poverty on the Waxhaw, held offices of dignity and honor on the Cumberland, sampled the flesh-pots on the Delaware.

The world he lived in suited him. Watching Rachel in the garden tending her flowers, and thrilling with

his pride in her, he knew himself for the most fortunate of men.

But that summer's peace was only an interlude. The Tennesseans, undaunted by his cool fashion of abandoning public office, must call him again into service. There was a vacancy on the bench of the supreme court, to be filled by the legislature, and Middle Tennessee demanded representation. Hays and Overton in their big-brotherly attitude toward Jackson heard with misgivings that he would accept the appointment. The court was required to ride circuit and Jackson had constantly expressed his desire to stay at home. An inconsistent person! a fellow cursed with a boyish passion for trying his hand at any new game that offered. The salary of the judgeship was only six hundred dollars, and Jackson could earn many times that amount by practising law. They would ask Rachel's assistance in persuading him to refuse the office. But Rachel was ready with an answer.

"I'm not going to say a word to him about it," she replied. "He knows all about the hard traveling and the poor pay, but he says if the people want him and the legislature is willing to give it to him he'll take it. The way he looks at it, it's his duty. There are a lot of mighty poor people in the state and if they get into trouble and have to go to law he thinks there ought to be somebody on the court who'll be just to them. He likes traveling around and seeing folks and telling them how to work their land. And feeling as he does about it, the small pay doesn't count, for he'd take it if there wasn't any salary at all."

As Hays had married a Donelson, he knew the intense loyalty of the women of the clan to their husbands and did not attempt to reply.

The Imps of Evil, enraged by the tranquil course of affairs at Hunter's Hill, were plotting against its peace. Jackson had hardly taken up his judicial duties before Allison, away off in Philadelphia, got into financial difficulties. The men to whom Jackson had assigned Allison's notes looked to the Tennessean for payment—an undreamed-of calamity. With the young republic in the throes of a panic, credit quickly tightened on the frontier. The Clover Bottom store had not proved a bonanza; the trade down the Mississippi was hazardous and yielded meager returns.

Jackson shut himself in his Nashville office and covered sheets of paper with calculations. The balance was heavily against him. He cursed his folly, struck the table a savage blow and sprang to his feet. The knowledge that he was ruined only roused his fighting blood.

He was exhilarated by the fact that he now had a task before him that would demand his full powers. An hour's intent thought to the accompaniment of a savage scraping of the quill and he had planned a readjustment of his affairs that would bring him out on safe ground; but it would take time. Here was the bitterness of it, that the whole thing couldn't be ended with a word, like a horse trade!

"I've struck hard times," he announced to Rachel when he reached home. "Allison has failed and I'm in a tight corner."

She rose quickly from her spinning-wheel and laid her hands on his shoulders.

"Nothing's ever as bad as it seems, my dear. If we've struck bad times we'll make them better."

In spite of the courage in his eyes she knew he was hard hit. Pacing the floor he told her, not sparing himself, the story of the disaster. He would pull out of it, he kept reiterating; he wouldn't let the catastrophe break him down.

"Of course it will come out all right, dear!"

"You do have faith in me, don't you?" he demanded. "I hate it more for you than for myself. But we're not going to whimper or let anybody know I'm licked."

"No one would ever dare say you're licked," she said, her eyes shining with love and admiration.

"The worst of it is I'll have to let this place go, and we've been mighty happy here. That's the worst of it. But we'll have another home; you needn't be afraid that I won't keep a roof over your head!"

"I wouldn't care if you didn't as long as we have each other. We'll never give up hope, my dearest."

"We'll not leave the Cumberland; we're going to stay right here!" he exclaimed belligerently as if some one had threatened to drive him from the land he loved.

He was again pacing the floor, his brows knit, his eyes snapping with the intensity of his thoughts as he tried to project himself into the future. As he passed her she caught his hand.

"Dearest!" she murmured.

He returned her smile; patted her cheek; stroked her hair.

"I don't believe you mind at all! Any other woman would cry if her husband told her he was ruined and she had to leave her home."

"Of course we're not going to cry, and as for leaving this place it would be all right if you told me we had to camp in the woods for the rest of our lives." She bent her head for a moment and then repeated slowly, smiling where her memory failed to yield the words:

" 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge . . . where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried . . .' "

Her lips quivered, the smile faded; he knelt, clasped her in his arms and their tears mingled.

Out of the wreck it would be possible to save a section of land eight miles from Nashville—the Clover Bottom tract of sixty acres included—and there they would set up a new home. They rode together to choose the site with as much enthusiasm as if it were to be their first adventure in home-building.

"We can get along with a smaller house than we have had at Hunter's Hill," the cautious Rachel suggested.

But the house, when they moved into it, proved to be quite as large and comfortable as the domicile they abandoned at Hunter's Hill. He had been forced to sell much land, a number of his slaves and a part of his live stock; but he managed to keep the best of his horses.

"One of these days," he remarked as they ate their first supper in the new house, "I'll give you the kind of

a home you deserve. Bad luck isn't going to follow me always!"

"The worst thing about leaving Hunter's Hill is losing the name. What shall we call the new place?"

"The Hermitage," said Jackson instantly. "It's been running round in my head ever since I knew we had to move. As we came here in our day of trouble I like to think of it as a sort of refuge. When I'm away I can remember I've got it to rest in. Hermitage has a peaceful sound, some way."

There was something a little plaintive in those last words, Rachel thought. Peace! She knew in her heart that peace was to be for ever his unattainable goal.

They left more behind them at Hunter's Hill than they knew. From the golden haze of romance in which they had lived they emerged into the realm of pitiless reality. Harassed by debt, he drove himself hard; often ill, he became increasingly irascible. Opposition sharpened his temper to a keen edge.

On the bench, with the prescribed black robe of the judgeship draped upon his narrow shoulders, he was subdued by the dignity of his position; but any trifling by witness or counsel would invite a stern reprimand and if the offender cared to continue the discussion outside the court-room the honorable Andrew would be ready for the encounter!

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAVALIER IN FIGHTING HUMOR

NO MAN carrying his head so high could fail to incur enmities. Even about Nashville there were those who resented Jackson's lordly airs and assumption of superiority. His very impatience of pettiness, evasion and delay were exasperating to men slow of thought and action. He knew that at Knoxville and Jonesboro there were men anxious for a chance to crush him if he manifested further political ambitions. He became morbidly suspicious, imagining opposition where none existed. Public offices were beginning to be sought zealously where formerly they had been accepted from a sense of duty. A fierce clan spirit marked the newly-formed factions and Jackson, loving and hating with equal intensity, rejoiced at the prospect of battle.

Fowler confided to Overton his hope that Jackson would be content with the judgeship and not enter the lists for other offices.

"No!" cried Overton wrathfully. "He's got another idea now. He wants to be major-general of the militia! God knows I'm for him for anything he wants, but it's a mistake for him to try for it against Sevier. He'll be beaten as sure as sunrise. Sevier has an old grudge against Jackson and he means to pay it off. The first time Andy went to Philadelphia he picked up a story

from some traveler that forged Tennessee land warrants had been sold by North Carolina officials. As the land was intended for veterans of the Revolution, Jackson was indignant and wrote a letter to the governor of North Carolina reporting what he had heard. Sevier had bought—innocently—some of the forged warrants. He learned that Jackson had instigated the investigation and he's been waiting for a chance to strike back. Jackson uses bad judgment in picking enemies! Sevier's twice been governor of this state. He's the most popular man in East Tennessee!"

"Jackson should withdraw from the contest," said Fowler decisively. "You'd better tell him so when you go to Knoxville for the next court."

At Knoxville, Overton found the hills rocking. The hero of King's Mountain was roaring his indignation that the young upstart from the Cumberland should seek the major-generalship. Jackson's own proficiency in ornamental invective was severely taxed to meet the vituperations of his enemy.

In Jackson's room at the tavern Overton, who deplored all violence, gently suggested that it was high time the war was ended.

"My God!" shouted Jackson. "You ask me to make peace with Sevier! The scoundrel is spreading scandal about me. He lies about me wherever he can find a coward to listen."

"He's bitter about the land scandal. You've got to remember that he's just as sensitive about his honor as you are about yours. This thing's going to injure you if you don't withdraw."

"By the Eternal, I'll not quit! I swear I didn't know he had bought any of the forged warrants when I wrote the governor of North Carolina what I'd heard. I had no idea of getting Sevier into trouble. My brother-in-law, Stockley Donelson, bought some of that land, and he's an honest man. Just listen to this letter Sevier's written about me." He whipped a paper out of his pocket and jerked it open with a snap. "Listen to this, John Overton!" Choking with wrath, Jackson snarled out the words: " 'I shall give no heed to the scurrilous expressions of a poor, pitiful, pettifogging lawyer and shall treat them with the contempt they deserve.' I'll ask you, John Overton, whether you expect me to let *that* pass! He's written other letters—and I've got 'em —trying to blast my reputation—damning me all over East Tennessee!"

"I wouldn't pay any attention to such stuff," said Overton stoutly. "He wants the major-generalship and I'd retire in his favor. You'll make friends by doing it."

"Retire! I'll be damned if I retire! I'll measure my strength against Sevier's for any office in Tennessee! He's libeling me; he's trying to injure my professional standing!"

"He signed your commission as judge; he might have prevented your election by the legislature," Overton ventured mildly.

"He didn't dare prevent it," Jackson declared in the grand manner of his perverse moods. "I know now why he didn't oppose me for the judgeship; he thought they'd stick me on the bench so I wouldn't be in his way when he runs for governor again! But while I

can sit a horse they'll not get rid of me so damned easy!"

The militia officers met, with excitement running high, to elect the major-general. Overton, fearing trouble no matter which of the hot-blooded aspirants should be victor, had lingered in Knoxville to hear the decision. The news that Jackson was elected was brought to the tavern by his jubilant, cheering partisans. There had been a tie and Sevier's successor in the governor's chair had cast the deciding vote.

The boy in Jackson was again awake. He was commander of an army! Other honors had come to him—prosecutor, framer of his state's constitution, representative and senator in the United States Congress, judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court—all were insignificant in comparison with his elevation to the major-generalship.

He viewed the landscape with a new pride and satisfaction as he rode home, like a king rejoicing in the glory of his kingdom.

Rachel, proud of his victory, nevertheless realized that the new office meant more labor, long absences, serious interference with his other pursuits. But even more regrettable, he had added to his list of enemies. She deplored a success that left him quivering with wrath at his opponents.

"Can't you afford to be generous toward General Sevier now?" she asked. "He's had things his own way so long he's sure to be terribly hurt at being beaten. You ought to tell him you didn't mean to injure him when you told about the land warrants."

"Apologize to that ruffian! Not for a million acres of the best land on this continent would I go on my knees to John Sevier!"

She knew that an appeal to his magnanimity in such a case was wasted; but if she had asked help for a poor immigrant or leniency for a thieving slave he would not have denied her.

"I love you so much, my dearest one! It's a grief to me that every one doesn't know how just and kind you are!"

"I wouldn't hurt you for all the world," he replied, all gentleness. "But a man must protect himself; you wouldn't have me let them trample me under foot!"

No man, she knew, could trample her fiery, passion-driven husband under foot and live. The knowledge added nothing to her happiness.

Fowler, at Jonesboro buying cattle for his broadening pastures, awaited the coming of Jackson on the outskirts of the town. A session of the court was at hand and Jackson's tardiness in arriving had given his friend concern. He saw him afar off, his horse at a walk, in marked contrast to Jackson's usual headlong speed. On nearer approach it was evident that something was amiss. Jackson, his head bent and his legs swinging free of the stirrups, swayed in the saddle like a drunken man. Fowler galloped out to meet him and seized the bridle-rein.

"Jackson!" he cried. "For God's sake, what's the matter?"

"Matter?" Jackson muttered, passing a shaking hand

across his eyes. He was not drunk, Fowler satisfied himself, but very sick and near collapse.

"You should have stopped somewhere and not kept the road!"

"I'm late—bad roads—keeping the court waiting." Jackson dragged the words out with an effort.

"You're in no condition to hold court! You mustn't go into town; I'll ride back with you to the first house and put you up there."

"Not go into town—go back? Why in hell should I go back!" Jackson demanded, thoroughly aroused by the suggestion that there were reasons why he should retreat. He pulled himself together and snatched the rein. "Who says I mustn't go to Jonesboro? I'm judge of the court, sir; I'd like to see anybody stop me!"

"You're sick; I can see the fever in your eyes. You'd better come back where it's quiet and stay till you're well again."

"Don't talk to me like a fool! There's nothing the matter with me. I know what's afoot. They're threatening me in Jonesboro! A handful of cowards! Assassins of character! By the Eternal! I'll show 'em whether they can scare me! Get out of my way, sir; I'm going to ride the scoundrels down!"

Fowler's attempts to explain that not a few enemies but a considerable mob threatened violence only strengthened Jackson's determination to face his enemies. Now seemingly clear in his mind, he rode into the town as if inviting attack, his burning eyes fixed straight ahead. The crowd about the tavern greeted

him with jeers and hisses, not knowing that the implacable figure kept the saddle only by sheer force of will. There was something ominous, terrifying in his deliberate advance to the tavern door.

"Here's the rascal now!" yelled a voice.

"Yes; I'm here, you curs!" Jackson shouted, surveying the crowd contemptuously.

His head throbbed like a drum and his tongue was like a clapper in his mouth. Failing in the effort to spring from the saddle with his usual agility, he was obliged to accept the landlord's assistance. But he walked steadily into the inn, the crowd falling back, struck with fear by the drawn face and eyes afire with fury.

Fowler called a doctor and installed himself as nurse; but after two fretful days in bed, Jackson took his place on the bench. No one would have guessed how passionate a heart beat under his black robe!

Sevier was filling the town with denunciations of the judge from Middle Tennessee. Nolichucky Jack was Sevier's sobriquet; a warrior to his finger-tips, invincible in battle against all foes white or red. The world should know without delay his opinion of the swashbuckler from Nashville—that ungrateful rogue, fomenter of strife and scandal-monger! Even now at Knoxville the legislature was investigating those land frauds. Jackson's meddlesomeness! The impudence of it! The strutting upstart must be taught a thing or two.

As he poured forth his feelings to a crowd in the public square the appearance of Jackson, emerging from the court-house, fired the veteran to fiercer vitupera-

tion. Jackson, freeing himself from the restraining hands of friends, mounted a cask in full view of his enemy. Their recriminations boomed across the square with the violence of artillery fire. Sevier, having gathered the crowd, was wrought to new fury at being obliged to divide the stage.

"The only public service Andrew Jackson ever rendered," he bellowed, "was to run away with another man's wife!"

"My God!" cried Jackson. "Do you dare mention *her* sacred name! I swear you shall die for this!"

In the tavern, ink flowed as Jackson penned a challenge, to be delivered forthwith by a swift messenger.

Seconds were chosen, time and place agreed upon; but at the appointed hour Sevier failed to appear.

For two days Jackson nursed his pistol. When they met it was by chance on the road to Knoxville, where the court was to meet. Both men, attended by their respective retinues, halted like bodies of contending knights. Sevier was arrayed for battle and wore his sword. A violent exchange of words and Jackson, waving a cane, spurred toward his foe. In his frantic attempt to dismount, Sevier's legs became entangled with his sword and he fell to the ground with the belt binding his legs. As he lay on his back trying to free himself Jackson, scorning to touch the fallen man, did not scruple to curse him with blistering epithets.

Their friends, taking advantage of this anti-climax, urged peace, and the two companies rode into Knoxville with a truce established.

But the insinuation, flung into the market-place at

Jonesboro, that his relations with Rachel had been touched with dishonor, left a gaping wound in Jackson's heart. If one tongue cast this reproach upon Rachel, others might be equally vile. He could defend his own honor, but where was there adequate punishment for a slanderer of his wife? It was monstrous and intolerable that any one should speak otherwise than with affection and admiration of the woman he loved.

That Sevier should have done this thing when he had known her from childhood, fought beside her father and knew all the circumstances of her unhappy marriage with Robards, was incredible. Never by the slightest hint should Rachel know that a man she believed her friend would reflect upon her chastity. How often she had spoken of Sevier with considerate kindness, as it was her way to speak of every one!

A latent morbid strain in Jackson's Scotch-Irish blood intensified. The men who hated him would strike at Rachel—make war upon a woman. Sevier had proved that. He became even gentler, tenderer toward her than before.

And she marveled, not understanding; found her heart-beat quickening every time she heard the swift clatter of his horse as he hastened home that he might give every possible hour to her.

CHAPTER XVIII

COLONEL BURR VIEWS THE WEST

ON THE fore-deck of a majestic barge, sumptuous in all its appointments, Colonel Burr, his head bared to the gentle airs of May, sipped wine and conversed with Lady Melderode. For good and sufficient reasons her ladyship was now addressed by the more plebeian title of Mrs. Rivington. A second barge trailing not far behind carried her baggage and an attendant negress and became, whenever discretion compelled it, her private transport on which she was making her way toward New Orleans.

Her meeting with Colonel Burr had been—if any one made inquiry—purely incidental. As old friends, whose acquaintance had begun in Philadelphia when the colonel's star was still ascendant, there was no reason why she should not visit him aboard his barge, which offered luxuries not provided by her humbler craft.

The colonel was in fine humor. His companion was not only amusing but she had seen much of the world, and the colonel's mind was just now filled with dreams that danced afar through golden vistas. In Europe a young man named Bonaparte, somewhat of his own figure, was amusing himself by shaking up the kingdoms. The colonel too had an imagination.

His career in the world to the eastward of the moun-

tains was closed; and yet he had proved his powers; he had tied with Jefferson for the presidency. If his bullet hadn't pierced Alexander Hamilton's side in that unhappy affair at Weehawken, he might have had another chance at the highest place. He was cleverer than other men. In a contest of wits he could crush any of those leaders who were now directing American affairs. Hamilton's ghost was interposed between him and the lofty seat he had coveted; but, after all, to lose the presidency of a struggling republic was nothing to cry about when he might, with ingenuity and courage, build a nation to suit himself.

"My dear Fanny!" he exclaimed, taking his companion's hand as they sat side by side watching the shadows deepen along the shores, "what a happy thought of mine—or yours—to bring you along. I'm sorry that you can't always share the entertainments where I land, but to do so would be to occasion remark among these simple people. I wished for you when I was with that most agreeable man Blennerhasset on his enchanting island. It's amazing how civilization marches ahead of the flag in this country! Blennerhasset lives magnificently; a delightful, cultivated gentleman. I should have fared better if I had turned my back on New York long ago and thrown in my lot with these splendid western folk. But it's not too late to begin anew? Tell me it's not, my dear Fanny."

"It's never too late for a man of your talents, my little colonel!" she replied in her soft purring tones. "This country can never be held together; it is bound to break in two. Nature gave the mountains to divide

it and these noble western rivers give the people an outlet of their own to the southern sea. If I understand your maps the West, if free of the seaboard states, can sweep clear to Mexico. But why pause there with all South America ready for conquering? Your dream is very beautiful! It is like something one reads of—the masterful marches of Alexander and Cæsar. Those southern mountains are full of silver and gold! Solomon in all his glory would dim beside you, my Lord!"

Colonel Burr smiled indulgently.

"You go far too fast, my dear Fanny. You are talking treason to the American republic! And treason has an ugly sound. It would please my enemies to draw a rope about my neck. I much prefer your arms, my sweet!"

"Always the gallant! I wish I could believe in you! But there have been far too many women in your life. If you gain an empire how may I be sure that I shall reign as empress?"

"Softly! These very shores have ears! I will not fashion me a scepter till I have a throne to sit on. We shall soon reach the Cumberland; it is in my plan to cut across the country to Nashville. Those Tennesseans are a fighting breed. Once I enlist a trustworthy lieutenant there I can press on south with more confidence. But I must make my approaches cautiously. Jackson is the man I need—once senator, now chief of the militia of his state. But I can't be sure of him."

"Ah, it's his domain we are invading? Surely you can't object to my seeing him? You were a witness of that pretty little affair when the absurd Liston tried to cut me at Mrs. Bingham's?" The memory touched her

humor and she laughed merrily. "Even you, dear friend, failed to support me! It was left to that brave knight of the backwoods to rattle his sword under Mr. Liston's nose. The rest of you looked so silly, as if I were about to cause war between America and England! It was very droll. But he wouldn't make love to me!"

"Probably the only man who never did!" Burr retorted. "I had almost forgotten the battle of Mrs. Bingham's punch-bowl. But the picture comes back to me. One thing about this Jackson—he's afraid of nothing—not even the British lion. It's important for me to impress him favorably. As the head of the militia he's in a position to serve me."

"I must see him myself, my Colonel. In our talks at Philadelphia I threatened to visit him, but he was most discouraging when I professed interest in the savages. You will go overland from the mouth of the Cumberland? There is nothing to prevent my keeping to my own little barge and arriving after you? I would not spoil your plans. I dare say a woman may travel alone safely even among the red people."

Burr frowned, evidently not pleased by the suggestion that she would follow him to Nashville.

"You must have a care! These people have very strict ideas. It would awaken prejudices if they suspected—well——"

He broke off with a slight shrug and she ended the sentence for him.

"—that we are somewhat more than friends thrown together by the exigencies of travel? Your delicacy is most delightful, my dear Colonel!"

"We must use sense, my dear Fanny! It's to save you from embarrassment that I am not taking you with me to Nashville. There may be some demonstrations of good-will there by the citizens; as my companion you would be conspicuous. It's better for me to appear to be traveling alone, with no thought but to serve my country."

He sighed and looked up at the sky in a way that evoked her light rippling laugh.

"How adorable you are, with your head filled with glorious schemes! You are embarked—but you know not for what port! A new republic, an empire, or merely a peaceful scheme for planting a colony in the South! It will be one or the other—whichever seems likeliest to succeed! My own joy would be in the empire; that would be much more in the spirit of the story-books. You and Bonaparte—each with a hemisphere! I can see you mounting a throne in the halls of the Montezumas to a fanfare of golden trumpets! You were born for large schemes of high emprise, my little Colonel!"

"Again, my dear, I beg you to speak more softly," Burr admonished. "These boatmen are not fools; I can see they are puzzled by my voyage. I'm anxious they shall regard me as a traveler inspecting the country with a view to buying land for a colony; only incidentally concerned with the defense of the frontier from the despicable Spaniards."

"I shall be a pattern of discretion, my dear, arriving at Nashville several days behind you. And my errand is to search for my dear unfortunate husband. Could

anything be sadder than the plight of a woman whose husband cruelly misjudges and deserts her—leaves her alone to fight her battles in the world? Could I fail of sympathy wherever it seems wise to tell my story?"

Burr smiled his appreciation of her mockery. She was keen—rather too clever for perfect comfort. He must be careful not to encourage her surmises as to the purpose of his journey. If things did not go well he must be ready to defend himself, and for all he knew she might be a spy sent by his enemies to watch him. If he got into trouble he must not be encumbered with a mistress—even so amusing a companion as Frances Melderode, whom he did not trust even as he sat with his arm about her, flattered by her admiration and responding to her cajoleries with the assurance that she was the only woman he had ever loved!

"My dear Fanny, you do not really believe your husband is still in existence?" he asked carelessly.

"Somewhere, beyond doubt, my little Colonel! Does he not pay into a bank stingy little sums for me? My New York banker tells me they are sent from England but never a word beyond that."

"Surely not trifling sums, my luxurious Fanny! But —there was the brother-in-law who caught your fancy; what of him? You've never explained why he failed to marry you after you parted from his lordship."

"Ah, he died—killed while hunting! You can see that left me in a very pretty plight! I am now but a wanderer. Without your love, my little Colonel, I should be wholly desolate!"

Night was creeping over the Ohio. The boatmen

pointed ahead to the southern bank, where lights began to glimmer through the dusk.

"That's a settlement at the mouth of the Cumberland," said Burr, rising briskly. "You must return to your own barge, my dearest nuisance! At Nashville we must be quite surprised when we meet!"

"At Nashville we shall be amazed by our meeting! Rest assured I shall not be a trouble to you. I shall tease the knightly Sir Andrew to show me the beauties of his forests and streams and he will keep me occupied. I am quite thrilled at the prospect of meeting my ferocious Jackson again!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE COLONEL AT THE HERMITAGE

A SLAVE returning to the Hermitage from an errand in Nashville brought a note from John Overton announcing Colonel Burr's arrival and demanding Jackson's presence in town forthwith.

"The colonel is paying Tennessee a great honor," said Jackson as he repeated the message to Rachel. "He was very courteous to me in Philadelphia and the least we can do is to entertain him in our house."

"Of course, my dear! Any friend of yours is welcome."

She at once gave orders for the guest-room to be made ready. It meant much less to her that Burr had held high place in the nation than that he had been kind to her husband. Her finest bed linen was brought from its cedar chest and with her own hands she redressed the high four-poster in the guest-chamber.

The proximity of Burr, a friendly man with brains in his head, who had not only helped to win statehood for Tennessee but was one of the few easterners to recognize the needs of the frontier, greatly stirred Jackson. No other man of Burr's distinction had cruised the western waters.

"He must meet as many of our people as possible!" he said. "If they think in the East that Burr's no longer

a factor in public affairs they're mistaken! We want to make friends with him and rouse his interest in our state."

He scrubbed and shaved himself and demanded her assistance in the choice of a shirt. He had got into his best breeches and was watching Rachel tighten a button on his coat when he detected in her face a look that awakened a suspicion that she did not fully share his gratification at Colonel Burr's proximity.

"He's one of our great men!" he declared. "I wouldn't want him to think we didn't appreciate what he did for Tennessee when we needed friends!"

"He killed General Hamilton," remarked Rachel, busy with her needle.

"Fairly, in a duel!" Jackson caught her up. "Hamilton had heaped every indignity upon him; Burr had to assert himself. No self-respecting man can allow his honor to be trampled upon. It was Hamilton who kept Burr from the presidency."

"If he's your friend that's enough, my dearest," Rachel replied, cutting the thread and handing him the coat. "You may be sure I'll do my best to make Colonel Burr's visit pleasant."

"I can always count upon you, my dear one! They call you the most gracious hostess in Tennessee!"

A white horse, the handsomest in the Hermitage stables, was carefully groomed, its hoofs polished like ivory, and it followed Jackson as he rode into town.

Nashville was astir; flags fluttered in the soft May breeze in honor of the visiting statesman. Messengers had borne the news of his arrival far through the valley

and mid-afternoon found a large crowd assembled about the tavern where the colonel was established. Overton had taken the initiative and ordered a feast prepared.

In the common room of the tavern Burr, affably conversing with the citizens, saw Jackson enter and advanced toward him with both hands extended.

"My dear Jackson! What a pleasure to see you on your own soil! My coming here is due solely to you!—the fine things you told me of your state and its people. And I find them no exaggeration. I was never received so cordially anywhere."

"That's as it should be, Colonel Burr! If I'd known of your coming I should have met you at the Ohio with a fitting escort. I now beg that you do me the honor to be my guest. Mrs. Jackson joins me in a hearty invitation to make our house your home as long as you remain here."

"Thank you, sir! It will give me the greatest pleasure, my dear Jackson. But first I must break bread with these good citizens! The kindness of Mr. Overton has made him seem already quite like an old friend."

It was not lost upon the onlookers, listening admiringly during this colloquy, that Burr held their former senator in high esteem. They had never been so proud of Jackson as now. His manners and speech lost nothing in comparison with those of the renowned statesman from over the mountains. The banquet was the best Nashville could provide and the participants overflowed the tavern dining-room into the common room, where the speakers at the main table were audible as

they toasted the guest of honor. The colonel beamed his appreciation. A pleasant affair indeed, and a fine expression of pioneer hospitality!

Jackson's brief address of welcome laid emphasis upon the importance of the colonel's visit. He would better understand western needs and the imperative necessity for preparing to defend the western waterways from foreign encroachment. If Spain insisted on war the Dons would be accommodated! The guest of honor smiled his approval of the militant spirit of the Tennesseans as they cheered these utterances of their major-general of the militia, a fighting man to his finger-tips.

Fowler, an inconspicuous member of the company, alone wondered what had inspired Colonel Burr's journey. With his wider knowledge of the world he was not disposed to take this man at face value. As his career in the East was ended by the bullet that killed Hamilton, there was reason to suspect that some motive other than the national welfare had prompted Burr's excursion.

Amid cheers Burr retired to pack his belongings preparatory to his removal to the Hermitage, and Jackson added a toast to the many that had been given, expressing the good-will of the people of the Cumberland toward the distinguished guest. The crowd dispersed and in the street outside Jackson waited with his horses for Burr to appear.

"I'm glad you joined us," he remarked to Fowler. "This is the first opportunity we've had to entertain a man of such prominence in the nation. I think Colonel

Burr is favorably impressed with our country and its people."

"Apparently—yes," Fowler replied rather coldly. "We don't really know why he's making this tour. If I were you I'd be a little wary of his confidences. He bears all the outward marks of a gentleman and he's plausible enough; but we don't know his purposes."

"He's a patriotic citizen!" Jackson retorted with asperity. "I hope you're not prejudiced against him on account of the Hamilton affair. Their difficulties had to be settled on the field of honor. It was Burr's good or bad fortune to kill Hamilton. In Burr Tennessee and the West had a friend and I'm not for turning my back on him now."

"The matter is of no importance to me," remarked Fowler with a smile. "If I were you I would listen to anything Colonel Burr has to say, but I'd be wary of committing myself. He's been thwarted in his highest aims and there's nothing further for him in American politics. He probably is looking for some new outlet for his energies. Our foreign relations are full of danger and some such man as Burr might easily take advantage of the situation to lead a movement on our southern coast that would threaten the existence of this republic."

"You do the man an injustice," declared Jackson hotly. "He's no traitor!"

It had been in his mind to ask Fowler to the Hermitage during Burr's visit, but it occurred to him on second thought that a danger lay in promoting the acquaintance of the two. He had seen Burr in Lady Melderode's

house in Philadelphia and Burr might in some perfectly natural way refer to her ladyship and disturb the exile's peace. Fowler's disapproval of the colonel was a relief, for he now had an excuse for not including him among the men he expected to invite to the Hermitage to dine with the guest. And Burr, with his keen intelligence, could not fail to note that Fowler was no ordinary immigrant, throwing in his fortunes with the Tennessee pioneers, but was of a different order, speaking not as they spoke and bearing marks of breeding and education impossible to disguise.

Fowler walked away as Burr emerged from the tavern, pausing to shake hands with the lingering banqueters. He had made the most favorable impression upon the men of the Cumberland by his agreeable manners. They pronounced him a good fellow; it was an outrage that the lack of one vote had defeated him for the presidency. They gave a hearty cheer as he mounted the superb horse Jackson had brought for him and rode away to the Hermitage.

Negro boys bearing lanterns danced like fireflies about the gates when they arrived. Within, every candlestick had been put to use in welcoming illumination, and Rachel, a housewife of the Virginia tradition, awaited the colonel in her best silk gown.

"I bid you welcome, Colonel Burr. It is a great pleasure to see you in our home," she said with a sweeping curtsy, to which he bowed deeply before advancing to take her hand.

"I am greatly honored, Mrs. Jackson. Your kindness in receiving me is beyond my deserving."

"Tennessee knows you for a friend, sir. My husband has talked much of his meetings with you in Philadelphia. I am glad to thank you for your kindnesses to him."

"Mr. Jackson left us far too soon! But I hardly blame him for turning his back upon the Congress. To a man of his strong common sense the dallying with public business is bound to be irksome. And now that I see his home——" A graceful gesture expressed his perfect realization that the home and its mistress had outweighed the allurements of public life.

As the gentlemen had so lately dined they went for a stroll about the grounds with Rachel accompanying them. The colonel manifested the greatest interest in plantation life, declared the country the most beautiful in all America. The fortitude and courage of the pioneers challenged his admiration; never had there been so sturdy a race as was represented along these great western watercourses. The simple sincerity of the people he had met on his journey had greatly touched him.

"You will pardon me, Mrs. Jackson, but unless I am mistaken your father was the great John Donelson —truly a great man and one of the founders of the nation. I read the story of the voyage of the *Adventurer* several years ago in an English book of daring deeds. I take it that you are the brave daughter who accompanied him? Madam, again I salute you!"

He lifted his hat reverently. Rachel, pleased always by any reference to her father, murmured her appreciation, not suspecting that the colonel had posted himself

as to the history of the Cumberland folk by inquiries in the settlements along the Ohio.

Colonel Burr proved to be the most acceptable of guests. His host filled the days with interesting experiences. These included attendance at a session of the court where Burr, honored with a seat on the bench, expressed his approval of the manner in which justice was administered. He inspected the Nashville militia company and addressed the citizen soldiery, congratulating the men upon having for their commander so valiant an officer as Major-General Jackson. A race was arranged at Clover Bottom that the colonel might note the superior qualities of Tennessee-bred horses.

He was impressed by the many evidences of Jackson's popularity; here was an ally worth enlisting for any enterprise that required intelligence and daring.

The apple toddies at the Hermitage were a stimulating potion and helped the colonel to forget the hatreds he had left behind him. He had not expected to linger so long on the Cumberland but it was a relief to be domiciled in so pleasant a home, where he even enjoyed the luxury of a body-servant, detailed by the host to look after his needs. And the mistress of the Hermitage was a very pretty woman, with the vivacity he admired in women, and a gracious, attentive, unfailingly thoughtful hostess.

The devotion of the Jacksons to each other was something new in his observation of married life. One might have thought them young lovers! The constant evidences of their affection touched even his cynical soul. No chance here for one of the flirtations in which he

was adept! This gentle little woman with her heart of laughter looked at him sometimes in a way most disturbing to his conceit. It might be that reports of his numerous affairs with women had penetrated even to the Cumberland wilderness.

He was uncomfortable when he remembered Lady Melderode and wished he had forbidden her to follow him to Nashville. Men might be tolerant of such relationships, but he preferred that the dark eyes of his hostess should not rest upon that fascinating featherhead he was carrying along to relieve the tedium of his journey.

A part of every day the guest reserved for himself, studying papers and maps, throwing off many letters at Jackson's writing-table. Or he would retire to a strip of woodland that had caught his fancy and Rachel would see him there, pacing back and forth, his hands clasped behind his back, in rapt meditation. What was the man thinking about? she wondered. She was used to her husband's straightforward speech; he always said what he meant in a manner that left no question as to his meaning; but the colonel, touching many subjects, was never very clear as to just why he was sailing western waters with his huge portfolio of maps.

He was busy with his papers one morning when Rachel accompanied her husband to inspect a new sheepfold, built to accommodate the spring's increase of the flock.

"You don't like Colonel Burr," remarked Jackson abruptly.

"If he's your friend that doesn't matter."

"But why don't you like him? He's a gentleman; you can't complain of his manners. He's certainly an interesting talker."

"Don't worry, my dear, if I can't believe in him. I never question your judgment about anything. It was perfectly right for you to bring him home. Forgive me for saying it, but he's not a man I'd trust. He's asking a great number of questions about the militia, and how many volunteers could be raised if we got into war; but somehow it seems to me he's keeping back something."

"Maybe he is, but it's natural for a man who's been in public life to ask such questions. First thing we know we'll be at war with Spain and caught napping. We ought to be glad somebody from the other side of the mountains sees the danger as he does."

"Then I *am* mistaken about him, my dearest!" she said with a laugh. "So we needn't say more about it."

"I'm bothered whenever you don't agree with me," he said with a broad smile. "I'm always afraid you may be right!" He reached over the fence, picked up a lamb and put it into her arms. "That's a sign of peace between us!" he said, and, with his arm about her, they returned to the house.

CHAPTER XX

THE CAVALIER MEETS LADY MELDERODE

A CASE called unexpectedly for trial required Jackson's presence in town the next day. The colonel declined an invitation to accompany him, as there were more letters to be written to be sent East by the first boat he encountered when he resumed his journey.

Jackson had finished his business before the court when the bailiff informed him that a lady was waiting to see him in his law office.

"What lady?" Jackson demanded, impatient to return to the Hermitage. The bailiff knew nothing except that a boy from the tavern had brought the message.

As he rarely had a woman client Jackson assumed that it was probably one of his sisters-in-law with a message for Rachel. He hurried down the street to the office, opened the door and was greeted at once by the cheery voice of a lady who had established herself comfortably by his table and was perusing a law book.

"My dear Senator, Judge, General —or whatever you are called now! You see I have made good my threat; I have arrived on the Cumberland! Is it possible you do not remember me! Or worse, that you are not pleased?"

"Lady Melderode!"

He made no attempt to conceal his astonishment. She

put out her hand, smiling indulgently at his consternation.

"One might think you are not elated to see me! But did I not tell you that I should one day visit your wilderness? Was I not to see savage princesses and have the honor of meeting your wife? Here I am, sir, as I might say, depositing myself on your very doorstep!"

Jackson's mind worked rapidly. He had never dreamed that Fowler's wife would invade the wilderness and the Devil himself could not have been less welcome. He had seen Fowler's horse hitched at the public rack in front of the court-house and it was wholly conceivable that his friend might at any moment appear at the office. He had left the door open, for the day was unseasonably warm, and he was now afraid to close it, knowing that he was face to face with a very clever woman who might suspect that he had a reason.

The woman had changed little in the few years that had elapsed since he had seen her last in Philadelphia. She was in no sense an object of pity. Her audacity, with its tinge of well-bred insolence, still served her well. An amused smile played about her lips as he remained standing, hat in hand, debating what to do with her.

"Won't you have a seat?" she asked mischievously. "Am I interfering with business? You look at me as if I were some strange animal that had wandered in from the forest."

There was no resentment in her tone; she was merely enjoying his very manifest discomfiture, which she

interpreted as an evidence of masculine impatience at having the usual routine of his affairs interrupted.

He sat down between her and the door, and affected an ease he did not feel. Given as he was to the quick utterance of his thoughts, he was now hard put to conceal them while he sought some way of protecting Fowler from discovery. Right heartily he cursed the hour in which he had allowed Norton to introduce him to the woman.

Even if the only guest-room the Hermitage afforded had not been occupied, it was a question whether Rachel with all her generosity would have received her. And this being true he could hardly ask Mrs. Donelson or Mrs. Hays to entertain her. He had never in his life been rude to a woman of any degree, but here was a plight before which his instinctive chivalry was helpless. But Lady Melderode was wholly serene, and he gave heed to what she was saying.

"I arrived only an hour ago in my little boat. The river trip has been very charming. I had never known the sweetness of spring until I began my cruise; it has been one continuous surprise and delight. And your Cumberland captivates me and—your quaint town! I had not thought to find so many people gathered here; it is quite a metropolis. I am most curious as to the mode of life of your settlers.

"But I have no wish to trouble you; I merely thought to seek you out and ask your counsel—as to the best tavern—one does wish to be as comfortable as possible. I left my belongings on the barge. I have my own crew —traveling in quite a queenly fashion. Cleopatra

afloat! Do you not like the comparison,—Senator—General?" She tilted her head and narrowed her eyes as she studied him. "You have the look of a warrior—an eye like Mars—to threaten and command."

It was sufficiently evident that she expected to be entertained in a private house; her reference to taverns was only her way of suggesting the matter. He was relieved to find that she had not yet established herself in any of the inns; she was far too different from the common run of travelers to escape scrutiny and her presence would be remarked upon and Fowler would be sure to hear of her. The main thing was to find a way of getting her out of the settlement before she aroused curiosity.

"It isn't possible to entertain you in my own house," he said bluntly. "Our accommodations are limited and just now Colonel Burr is with us."

"The dear colonel your guest! How fortunate you are! Only a week ago he passed me on the Ohio. He is full of enterprises, that amazing man! If your government will not drive Spain from your southern shores the colonel will smash the Dons with his own sword!"

"Colonel Burr has the best interests of America at heart," Jackson replied sharply.

"Not so peppery, my dear General! I'm not questioning the colonel's patriotism. I forgot to say," she went on, touching her nose with a tiny lace-bordered handkerchief, "that to simplify matters on my western journey I am calling myself Mrs. Rivington. One must respect the feelings of a people who despise aristocracy!"

"I think you are quite wise," Jackson assented, so grimly that her ladyship laughed.

He was annoyed that she seemed to surmise his discomfiture at seeing her and was laughing at him just as on the occasion when he met her in the Philadelphia jeweler's and she had made it necessary for him to offer his escort for the inauguration. He had been a fool ever to yield to her cajoleries; she was a mischief-maker, a dangerous person. There came back to him Norton's cautious intimations that she might not be in America to seek her husband, but as a spy.

Never before in his life had he been so perplexed; he wished Lady Melderode at the bottom of the sea. Rachel had already expressed her doubts as to Colonel Burr; there was no question as to what she would say of this woman, who quite remarkably was journeying through the West in close proximity to the former vice-president of the republic.

Lady Melderode, enthroned in a battered hickory chair, with her light gray cloak flowing from her shoulders, had also been doing some thinking. Her reference to Colonel Burr had been a deplorable mistake. Burr's affairs with women had been no secret in Philadelphia and this Puritan countryman undoubtedly had heard the gossip. He was far from dull; he had seen Burr in her house and it was not unlikely that behind the blue eyes of this former senator there lurked suspicions as to the accidental nature of her meeting with the colonel. It had been a serious error on her part not to act on Burr's hint that she eliminate Cumberland from her itinerary. She was stupid not to have thought of the

possibility of Burr's entertainment by the Jacksons, but Burr himself had not foreseen that. She herself had hoped to be invited to the Jackson house and she was curious as to the wife who, Norton had said, at the time of Jackson's resignation, was the lure that had taken him home.

"Dear me! Your eyes wander; you are vastly bored! I am keeping you from better business." She gathered up her cloak and rose with a sigh. "I should be grateful if you would direct me to the best of your inns; I really must have a night away from the boat. My quarters are close and I need exercise—a gallop on a horse, which I dare say the tavern can furnish me."

The plaintive touch she gave this might prove effective; it was worth trying at least. But Jackson, quickly on his feet, was not so easy to wheedle on his home soil as in Philadelphia.

"I advise you against the inns, madam. Women do not travel alone in these parts. You would be safe enough, but at times rough characters pay the settlement a visit. I counsel you to keep to your boat."

"And why don't you add," she demanded, her face white with anger, "why don't you add that the sooner I leave this miserable hole the better!"

"For the excellent reason, madam, that you know that as well as I."

"When you rescued me at Mrs. Bingham's the night those stupid Listons saw fit to insult me, I thought you were a man of knightly spirit. But you evidently believed the unkind stories you heard about me in Philadelphia and now see fit to order me from this place.

What's become of your chivalry? I had really looked forward with pleasure to meeting your wife and seeing this country to which you are so devoted. I think," she added, "that in spite of you I shall remain for a few days! You try to frighten me as to the danger from rough frontiersmen, but I will put myself under the protection of the tavern-keeper. You shall not have the satisfaction of driving me away as if I were a criminal!"

Several wagons, a few pedestrians and horsemen had passed during their colloquy and Jackson with his woodsman's instinct had turned his head at every sound. He knew the step of all the horses of quality in the district—General Robertson's bay mare, John Overton's single-footer, Bob Hays' black stallion; and having assisted in the purchase of Fowler's stable, he could have named his friend's horses in the dark from their peculiarities of gait.

It was some distance from the office to the tavern and it was still farther to the wharf, where the wandering lady's barge was moored. Jackson was increasingly perplexed. Fowler, now thoroughly established as a citizen of the community, might be lingering at one of the inns or stores, talking to other settlers as was his habit, and it was quite conceivable that he might emerge from one of his trading or loafing places just as Lady Melderode passed.

His only concern was to get rid of the woman before she had a chance to see her husband, or the man who had borne that relationship to her. He was determined to prevent a meeting between his friend and the woman who had wronged him.

"I would not have you think, madam——" he began, replying tardily to Lady Melderode's last remark, when his alert ears caught the sound of horses approaching. Overton—there was no mistaking the horse; and Fowler—yes, that was the steady rhythmic hoof-beat of Fowler's powerful stallion.

"Let me repeat, madam, that I deeply regret that circumstances make it impossible to entertain you in my house——"

But Lady Melderode, curious as to the horsemen, was walking toward the door. She paused, gasped, put out her hand quickly as Overton and Fowler, deep in talk, rode by. Fowler, in his plain frontiersman's garb with the brim of his wool hat pushed up from his forehead, was laughingly replying to some remark of his companion. Neither he nor Overton glanced toward the office, but Lady Melderode's eyes were fixed upon them. Fowler, on the farther side, with his face turned toward Overton, all unconsciously was offering himself to her gaze.

"As I was saying——" began Jackson, who in his agitation did not know what he had begun to say.

But Lady Melderode had sprung to the door, staring after the men until they passed from sight.

She walked slowly back to her chair and grasped it for support.

"That was Melderode!" she said faintly. "That was my husband."

"Yes," Jackson replied.

"You've known—you've known all the time? How long has he been here?"

The spirit had gone out of her, and she sank into her chair.

"He's my friend. I'm sorry, madam, but I refuse to answer any questions as to his coming here. But I don't mind saying he is established as a planter and seems to be content. It's because he's found peace among our people that I have no intention of permitting you to meet him. No good could come of it."

"Ah! That is the way you feel about it! He has told you, I suppose, *his* story of our separation and you believe it?"

"Yes, I believe it," Jackson answered, meeting her gaze steadily.

"Why should I have made search for him if his accusations were true?"

"To annoy and harass him," Jackson responded coldly. "I can believe you capable of it."

"You think so ill of me as that!"

"If you must know my opinion, a woman who breaks a man's spirit and drives him into exile—utterly wrecks his life——"

"Ah, you have no pity—no compassion!"

"None," he answered. "I know my friend for a man of scrupulous honor—not the man to fling aside his wife on mere rumor as to her chastity."

"You knew him before you met me and you told him, I suppose, that I was in America?"

"I told him nothing. It was my duty as his friend to help him forget. He's happy and content in his labors here; he's one of the most highly respected citizens of the valley. In every way he's kind, generous and

helpful. If he hadn't convinced me that it was you who were in the wrong I should have told him of meeting you; done what I could to bring you together. But I knew it would avail nothing. I leave it to you, madam, whether in all justice you should not spare him."

"He has buried his identity, I suppose—his name?"

"He's not known by his true name; my wife and I alone know it."

"If I could see him," she began, "perhaps——"

"You will not see him, madam."

He stood between her and the door, his arms folded, a hard glitter in his eyes. He remembered Fowler's emotion the day he drew her miniature from its place over his heart; but his determination was unshaken. It would be a cruel thing to permit a meeting of the two. At all hazards he would save Fowler the pain of that.

"But there are matters of business to be settled between us."

She had caught at this as a pretext worth trying, but Jackson shook his head.

"I doubt it. If there are any such questions he knows it perfectly and is capable of finding ways of managing without an interview. He made provision for you, didn't he?"

"Don't speak of it! Only a paltry sum—in itself an insult!" she answered, a contemptuous curl of her pretty lip emphasizing her scorn of the provision her husband had made for her.

"The allowance was wholly voluntary on his part, wasn't it?" asked Jackson sternly. "And you appeared

to be living quite comfortably in Philadelphia. Generous of him, I should say! And what you want now is to wring more money out of him. Isn't that it?"

"You are insulting!" she flared. "You think you can bully me—frighten me away!"

"Have you lived a clean life since you left him? If I were disposed to let you remain, that might carry some weight."

She was not prepared for this. Her face flushed and she drew herself up, quivering with fury. "You are piling up your insults, sir! How dare you speak to me in such a fashion!"

"For a friend I will go far, madam. If your husband had any desire to see you he would have told me so long ago."

"You are cruel! You are unjust and pitiless!"

"Maybe I am; but that's a matter for my own conscience. I am asking you, madam, to be merciful for once in your life. I'd have a better opinion of you if you'd let this man live in peace."

"You take much upon yourself, sir! What if I should appeal to the authorities—what if I should denounce you—tell the villagers of the manner in which you've insulted me when I came to you with every right to expect courtesy?"

"I advise you against it. You'd not help yourself much by screaming from the housetops."

"I think there's a devil in you!"

"I've heard that before," he replied dryly.

"Lord of the Universe—what would you have me do?" she drawled mockingly as she rose.

"It will be well for you to leave this place immediately. I will accompany you to your boat."

"And if I should refuse—make a scene for you to explain to your villagers?"

"Colonel Burr would not be pleased," he answered.

Far indeed from being a fool was this long-legged farmer, with his firm-set jaw and implacable eyes! His remark gave her pause. She had no great faith in Burr's chivalry. He would in all likelihood repudiate her if she created a disturbance, for she knew enough of the colonel's projects, hazy though they were, to understand that he was bent upon cultivating Jackson's friendship. She was beaten, but she would not bow her head in defeat.

"I think I'll return to my barge," she said, as if the idea were a sudden inspiration.

"The thought is creditable to your good sense—Mrs. Rivington!"

As he walked beside her down the street, she spoke of her further plans quite as if nothing disagreeable had happened. She would go on to New Orleans, which she had heard was quite fascinating—far less provincial than the cities of the Atlantic coast. These, she confided, had lately depressed her unspeakably. He listened gravely; answered her inquiries with all courtesy. At the wharf he inspected her boat, found it well stocked with provisions. Besides the boatmen there was the negress to attend to her needs. There was no reason why she should not depart at once for the Ohio.

"I might return," she suggested mischievously. "It would be truly delicious to trick you."

"That is your privilege, madam. But you would regret it."

The barge swung slowly out from the wharf. As he lifted his hat she flung him a kiss.

"Until our next meeting, General!" she cried gaily.

Colonel Burr was greatly relieved by Lady Melderode's non-appearance. Sensitive as he was to social atmospheric conditions, he realized that her presence in Nashville during his stay at the Hermitage would have been extremely embarrassing. The Tennesseans were far more sophisticated than he had imagined; with all his romantic affection for the West, he was surprised by the dignity, as of an old civilization, that marked life on the Cumberland. He saw clearly that Lady Melderode, his plaything for the time, could have contributed only a jarring note to the harmony in which he found himself. It was not against him with these friendly people that he had killed Hamilton, but an illicit relationship with an exotic creature like Lady Melderode would be sure to arouse antagonism. Even a man as clever as he knew himself to be might fail in the attempt to greet the amusing lady as a friend encountered by accident on western waters.

As the days passed he decided that, being a person of volatile temperament, she had forgotten her interest in seeing Jackson on his home soil and was seeking Indian princesses farther down the Ohio.

Satisfied that he had acted wisely in sending the woman on her way, Jackson continued his efforts to keep the colonel entertained. Burr's personal morals

were one thing; his patriotism was quite another. Burr was the first man he had encountered in a long time whose ideas squared so perfectly with his own.

"Never in my life have I passed five happier days!" declared the colonel, on the veranda of the Hermitage. "My boatmen will be expecting me and I must leave to-morrow."

"Business in court keeps me at home," said Jackson, "or I would accompany you to the Ohio. I think you will be more comfortable not to go overland to your barge so I'm providing you with the best boat in my fleet for that stage of your journey."

"That is like you, sir!" exclaimed Burr. "You think of everything! I envy you your complete happiness here—these verdurous fields and magnificent woodlands and the companionable river; your stanch friends and the high regard in which all the people hold you. Truly your lines have fallen in pleasant places, and I," he went on with an air of melancholy, "am become a wanderer. It is not a comfortable thing, my dear Jackson, at my age to find the cup of life bitter. I have but two reasons for living—my dear daughter Theodosia, and"—he paused a moment and his voice fell reverently—"my country."

He left the Hermitage at daybreak but not without ceremony. The negroes, having been impressed by his amiable manners and aware that he was a great man, like their master, had voluntarily gathered in the driveway to bid him Godspeed. The colonel came out briskly to where his host and hostess awaited him on the veranda.

"Mrs. Jackson," he began with gracious formality, "I have never before known the true meaning of hospitality! You have made me feel at home from the moment I arrived. Your kindness has made me truly a member of your household. To say that I am grateful would be to confess my poor command of the language! But I thank you with all my heart."

"It has been a pleasure to have you here," Rachel replied. "On your return we shall expect to see you again. I wish you all good fortune on your travels."

"I thank you, madam. It has been good for my soul to be here. I have known much sorrow in my life but I leave you a happier man. It is a privilege to have the friendship of your husband. No man I have ever known has so true a sense of the future of America. Mr. Jackson is one of those frank, great-hearted souls it is an inspiration to know."

He rode away to the accompaniment of the negroes' lusty farewells, graciously returning their salutations, calling them by name. Jackson accompanied him into Nashville and established him on the boat.

In the fall the colonel was again in the Hermitage guest-room. He had added to his stock of maps and was full of schemes but seemed more particularly interested in colonization projects. The South and West must be developed; the opportunities were immeasurable! But Rachel was not more impressed than on his first visit. She feared that her restless spouse might take it into his head to leave the Hermitage and follow Burr to the colony in the Southwest which was among his dreams.

CHAPTER XXI

TRUXTON

"THERE'S the fastest horse in Tennessee!" Jackson declared as he stood with Rachel at the barn-lot fence. "I reckon he'll show some of these fellows who think they know horse-flesh what a real horse is. Bring him over here, 'Lijah! You scoundrel! Pick that straw out of his mane! Anybody'd think you lazy hounds had no eyes, the way you groom a horse!"

The boy grinned, discounting his master's ferocity. No eyes but the master's would have seen that wisp of straw! Truxton walked to the bars and poked his nose into Rachel's hand. Jackson had that day returned from Virginia with half a dozen of the well-bred animals in which he delighted. Truxton, though lean from his long journey, was clearly a beast of power. Rachel did not need her husband's expert recital of the horse's merits to see that the big clean-limbed stallion belonged to the equine aristocracy.

"Prettiest legs I ever saw!" Jackson was saying. "Trot him round, 'Lijah—there! Watch how neat he lifts his feet! Got the right forward thrust for speed—got everything! Swing him round! Nothing clumsy about that! Dainty as a lady in a ballroom!

Truxton returned to the bars prancing, nostrils quiv-

ering, eyes bright as if contemptuous of so tame an exhibition of his grace and strength.

"Same blood as Diomed—and Diomed's the best horse America's seen. I'm ashamed to tell you what I paid for him—it was a heap o' money; but I had to bid against a South Carolina man who wanted to race him at the Charleston Jockey Club. I reckon we'll see some races at Clover Bottom now!"

Truxton, turned loose in the pasture, kicked up his heels and neighed lustily in the pride of his strength. Rachel was glad that her lord had something new with which to amuse himself. His nature demanded change and novelty. Having resigned the judgeship, he had sought the governorship of Louisiana following Jefferson's purchase of that territory, and she knew that no matter how bravely he bore his disappointment he was hurt by the president's failure to give him the place. But always there was that prayer in her heart for his happiness. Truxton would serve well as a diversion for the restless, excitement-loving master of the Hermitage.

The stallion's arrival caused a flutter in Nashville, where every man was either actively or potentially a sportsman. He was under discussion at Winn's Tavern one afternoon when Thomas Swann joined the group of idlers. Swann, a recent addition to the community, was a Virginian and boasted much of his acquaintances and friends in the Old Dominion. While waiting for clients he flirted, lent a sympathetic ear to gossip and was disposed to speak condescendingly of even such local heroes as General Robertson and Captain Hays.

Among his few intimates he was looked upon as a man of the world, to be pardoned if he found the people of the valley uncouth and uninteresting.

Swann had reason to dislike Jackson, who had beaten him in the first case he undertook in the Nashville court. Jackson had not only defeated him but had exposed the trickery of Swann's client in a manner that made the young attorney ridiculous in the eyes of judge and jury. The humiliation of this still rankled and he waited for a chance to retaliate. He had acquainted himself with all the circumstances of the Robards divorce and in his own circle referred to that incident in unpleasant terms as highly discreditable to the Jacksons.

"I've seen Truxton," Swann remarked as he puffed his pipe. "Jackson was putting him through his paces at Clover Bottom yesterday. I know a dozen horses around here I'd rather own than Truxton."

"Name one!" demanded one of the company. "The general's ready to match Truxton against any horse in the state and I reckon he knows what he's about."

"Oh, anything Jackson's got's the best in the state!" replied Swann with a sneer. "You ask for a better horse than Truxton? Well, I'll name Captain Erwin's Plowboy."

He had lifted his voice to attract the attention of Captain Erwin and Charles Dickinson, who were absorbed in talk at a near-by table.

"What's this about Plowboy?" Erwin asked.

"I was saying, sir, that Plowboy is a better horse than General Jackson's Truxton," Swann replied.

Erwin was a man of importance in the community, and Dickinson, his son-in-law, was very popular among the young people with whom Swann was eager to ingratiate himself.

"Well, we'll have to look into this," remarked Erwin good-naturedly.

"If Jackson wants a race we'll accommodate him," said Dickinson.

"Jackson would rather brag about a horse than race him," Swann ventured. "I'll lay anything I've got that Plowboy's got more speed. I hope, sir, you'll give us a chance to see him run away from Truxton."

"He might and he might not," replied Erwin cautiously. "I understand Jackson won't race the horse except for big stakes, and I'm not anxious to give the general any of my money."

"Well, we won't let Jackson's boasting scare us out," remarked Dickinson sourly. "The general's got the big head and needs taking down."

There were murmurs of assent from the group about Swann, but Erwin frowned.

"That will do, Charlie," he said sharply. "We're all friends of the general. There isn't a man in Tennessee who'd go further to help a friend than Andy Jackson!"

As the summer waned hardly a week passed without an exciting race at Clover Bottom. Jackson was always present, the most keenly interested of all the spectators. His blood quickened as under no other inspiration at the sight of two evenly matched horses flying over the course. That year he had raced other horses of the Hermitage stables with varying success, but Truxton,

his pride, had not been put to a test because the horsemen of the Cumberland were wary of the Virginia stallion and in no haste to invite a contest.

Swann, impatient at Jackson's immunity from challenge, frequently urged Dickinson to encourage Erwin to run Plowboy against Truxton.

Dickinson, like Swann, was a new practitioner at the Nashville bar. He was a Marylander, of good antecedents and well educated, and his marriage to Captain Erwin's daughter had added to his prestige. He was regarded as one of the most promising young men in the valley, marked for a successful career. A crowd gathered whenever his sonorous voice, reverberating from the court-house, gave notice that he was addressing a jury. Conceited and arrogant, he was likely to become quarrelsome when he lingered too long in the drink shops. Among his other accomplishments he was an expert shot, as demonstrated in many turkey shoots and rifle matches. A likable fellow, but dangerous where his ire was aroused.

At his importunity Erwin began to think seriously of running Plowboy against Truxton. The prospect of closing the season with an event that would surpass every other incident on the Tennessee turf became the matter most discussed in taverns and stores. Erwin, encouraged by Dickinson to believe that Plowboy could easily overcome Truxton, finally proposed a race.

"You think you've got a better horse than Plowboy," he said, meeting Jackson at Winn's. "If you want to race Truxton against my horse, name the stakes."

"Two thousand dollars, the race to be run ten days

from to-day and a forfeit of eight hundred dollars if either party withdraws," Jackson answered promptly.

"I'll have to give you notes," said Erwin.

"That's agreeable to me," Jackson replied. "I'll want to give notes myself. Come to my ofiice when you're ready—the sooner the better."

The next day Erwin and Dickinson appeared at Jackson's office and declared themselves ready to discuss terms. Jackson, still crippled by his financial difficulties due to Allison's failure, volunteered his own paper and the notes of three friends.

"I want you to be satisfied in every particular," he said. "Major Anderson, Major Verrell and Captain Pryor are good?"

"I couldn't ask better names," Erwin answered. "Charles Dickinson is going partners with me in this and we'll put in other notes of hand I'm holding. Notes on both sides to be demand paper."

Erwin named six substantial citizens of the valley who were to share the stake and Dickinson wrote them on a sheet of paper.

"Very good, gentlemen," said Jackson and thrust the memorandum into his pocket.

"Let the rules of the Clover Bottom course govern," said Erwin. "If any points occur to you, we can discuss them before the race.

Jackson rode home jubilant and told Rachel that at last she should have a chance see Truxton show his mettle.

"That money's mine right now!" he exclaimed. "Truxton will win by ten lengths. Erwin wouldn't have

asked for a race if Dickinson hadn't screwed him up to it."

"I watched the boys exercising Truxton this morning," remarked Rachel. "He looks as if he could run away from the wind."

In Nashville discussion waxed hot; fights occurred; men borrowed money to wager on the race. In the days that intervened Jackson, up with the sun, gave personal care to Truxton, planning the strategy of the race, counseling the black boy he had chosen as jockey as to every imaginable emergency.

Rachel, always sensitive to every change in his moods, rejoiced in his happiness. He must win the race; she was as thoroughly aroused as he over the prospect of victory.

Riding into Nashville two days before the appointed time Jackson learned that Captain Erwin was seeking him. Some detail of the race, perhaps; he went through the town inquiring for the captain and found him at Bell's store.

"Jackson," Erwin began immediately, "I'm ready to pay my forfeit. Plowboy went lame yesterday—his left forefoot's badly swollen. I'm ready to deliver the notes and cover the forfeit."

"Damned bad luck, Captain! I'm mighty sorry. I'd rather have the race than your money."

"Nothing's proved till it's tried. I still hold I've got the better horse," said Erwin.

On their way to Jackson's office they picked up Dickinson, Anderson and several others who had been inter-

ested in the contest, and the notes were delivered. Jackson, good sportsman and sincere horse-lover, was keenly disappointed and betrayed no elation at the abandonment of the race.

"Are the notes according to agreement?" Erwin asked, handing over the slips of paper. "They cover Dickinson's share and my own."

"They are what you promised," Jackson assented. "When Plowboy's leg clears up you'll find me ready to talk."

They shook hands under the eyes of a dozen disappointed spectators who had collected in the room. Dickinson repaired to Winn's bar, where he found Swann and acquainted him with Plowboy's misfortune.

"More of Jackson's luck!" he complained. "The captain's nigger's to blame for overheating the horse and not blanketing him. Jackson will swagger worse then ever now."

"There's not much glory in taking forfeit money," remarked Swann. "Plowboy'll beat Truxton yet."

Several bystanders, hearing for the first time of the abandonment of the race, drew nearer. Dickinson, glass in hand, swung round from the bar.

"Jackson's luck's too good to last," he said loudly. "But, by God, it's going to change some day! He's trampled on everybody in Tennessee who wouldn't bend the servile knee to him!"

"Be careful, Charlie, what you say about the general," admonished one of the group.

"Hell! You don't think I'm afraid of Andrew Jackson!" cried Dickinson, glaring at the speaker. "I'd

like to know what excuse he'd got for his uppish airs! Every time there's a political job anywhere he thinks he's got to have it. He went to Washington to get the Louisiana governorship. My God! Presumptuous ass! He didn't fool Thomas Jefferson!"

"And Jefferson made a mistake in not appointing him!" put in one of Jackson's friends. "He'd have been the right man for the place!"

"Oh, you're one of the faithful bootlickers, are you!" Dickinson sneered. "A man who floats down the river with another man's wife and pretends to marry her when she's still a married woman *may* be a gentlemen—but, by God!—not to me!"

"I'd be careful what I say on that subject, sir!" said one of Jackson's friends. "It's not the part of a gentleman to besmirch a woman's character in a barroom."

"Another of Jackson's sycophants, eh?" retorted Dickinson, emptying his glass and banging it on the bar.

"You're drunk," said the other contemptuously, and moved away, leaving Dickinson to continue his arraignment of Jackson as an adulterer who had flouted the law.

Dickinson's remarks, caught up and repeated, presently reached Jackson's ears. He was furious, inspected his pistols, resolved to kill the man on sight. But—to kill Dickinson and let the reason be known would revive gossip about that unhappy business of the divorce, and Rachel would be the sufferer. It would break her gentle trusting heart and Rachel's peace was always his first consideration. He would

bide his time. The God of Rachel's faith would punish her slanderer.

His mind never functioned so perfectly as when on horseback and on his long rides his thoughts concentrated upon Dickinson. He must find some way of stilling that slanderous tongue but in a way that would protect Rachel. His speculations drew a wide circle about his grievance, but he was firm in his belief that ultimately it would tighten and crush his enemy.

Swann, with few professional employments, harvested the aftermath of the race that was never run. There were skeptics who refused to accept Erwin's reason for withdrawing Plowboy, and Swann rallied to the defense, for had he not with his own eyes seen Plowboy's crippled leg? He picked up a report that Jackson was complaining that the notes for the forfeit money were not according to agreement. Hearing this, with rumors that Dickinson was responsible for the story, the lord of the Hermitage smiled grimly. That circle which he had first seen as wide as the serene Tennessee autumn sky was tightening. He would watch, listen and wait.

At Bell's store, in the court-house and in the public rooms of the taverns, Mr. Swann, late of Virginia (he thus proudly signed himself), collected rumors and winged them for new flights. Others of Jackson's enemies covertly urged him on, thinking that he would irritate the general if he did no more.

Swann, puffed with importance, declared that Jackson had, at the Clover Bottom store, informed him that while Dickinson's forfeit notes were according

to agreement, Captain Erwin's were not. A few days after Christmas Jackson decided to take notice of this assertion, which had been well distributed about Nashville. He rode into town with John Coffee, picked up Fowler at Bell's and went to Winn's in the hope of finding Swann or Dickinson. Swann, however, was not visible, but Dickinson was there with Erwin.

"Captain Erwin," Jackson began immediately, "what's this story that little feist Swann is circulating about the notes? He seems anxious to take a licking."

"The matter's of no importance, General," Erwin replied. "But there's some talk going round that you're not satisfied about the notes. I take it for granted that if the notes we gave you were not according to agreement you would have come to me direct."

"You're right, Captain Erwin. But I object to this slinking little cur meddling in my affairs."

Dickinson, who had remained seated, looked up quickly and exclaimed: "I'll have you know, General Jackson, that Mr. Swann's a friend of mine!

"So! Then I congratulate you both!" Jackson retorted witheringly.

"Didn't you tell Swann at Clover Bottom that my notes were as agreed but that Captain Erwin's were not!" demanded Dickinson, springing to his feet. "Didn't you complain that Captain Erwin didn't give you notes immediately collectible as he promised? I ask you, sir, whether you haven't made such statements at various places and to various people and whether your friend Major Anderson hasn't been saying the same thing by your authority!"

"No, by God!" cried Jackson hotly, pointing a quivering forefinger at Dickinson. "Patten Anderson is a gentleman and a man of truth and I will answer for him that he uttered no such thing! Mark this, Mr. Dickinson!—whoever quotes me as saying the notes were not according to agreement is a damned cowardly liar! There's a way of settling this matter, sir! I think you understand what I mean."

"You're going too far, General!" cried Erwin. "That matter of the notes doesn't call for violence!"

"I beg your pardon, General," Dickinson mumbled.

"As you say, gentlemen," returned Jackson quietly. "Let us all have a drink!"

Several days passed before this meeting was reported to Swann, and he was alarmed to find that his whispered innuendoes had reached the general's ears. Something was required of him and pretentiously he dispatched a letter to the Hermitage demanding satisfaction on the field of honor.

"Impudent young whelp!" Jackson ejaculated as he tossed the letter into Rachel's lap. But he turned courteously to Swann's messenger. "My compliments, sir, to Mr. Thomas Swann. He has honored me with a challenge to fight. Pray tell him I refuse to meet him on the field of honor for the excellent reason that he is not a gentleman."

"That will make him all the madder," remarked Rachel when the astonished messenger had retired.

"That," laughed Jackson, "is what I want. I reckon he didn't expect that answer. I'll drop in at Winn's tomorrow and see what further he's got to say."

CHAPTER XXII

TROUBLE ON THE CUMBERLAND

THE logs in the tavern fireplace blazed merrily as Jackson, carrying a cane, walked briskly in. Silence fell upon the company as with a comprehensive greeting he walked to the fire, thrust the stick under his arm and unconcernedly extended his hands to the blaze.

"Mr. Jackson!" began Swann, jumping from his chair. "I've got a matter to settle with you, sir! I sent you a letter yesterday calling you to the field of honor for the aspersions you have cast upon my character. You sent a verbal reply that you declined to meet me—declined, I am informed, for the reason that you question my title to the name of gentleman!"

"That is right, sir! For once in your life you have spoken the truth."

"You shall pay for this!" screamed Swann, white with fury.

"Take this on account!" cried Jackson, and, springing forward, he laid his cane vigorously across the young man's shoulders.

The blow was delivered with a force that carried Jackson over a chair and on to the floor, but he was up instantly, still grasping the stick. Swann, with his back to the wall, was trying to draw a pistol.

"I can't allow this!" cried the landlord, rushing from the bar. "There must be no shooting here!"

"Don't trouble yourself, Mr. Winn," remarked Jackson. "The little mongrel won't shoot me—not even in the back! Set out whisky for all these gentlemen—mind you, sir! I say all the *gentlemen* present."

He pointed his stick at Swann, to accentuate the fact of his exclusion from the proffered refreshment. Swann's pistol remained concealed by his coat tails while Jackson, warmed by a hot toddy, left the room.

That night, after Rachel had gone to bed, he decided to reply to Swann's letter. Swann was nothing—hardly worth kicking into the Cumberland—but the time had come to draw Dickinson further into the circle of his hatred. He wrote and rewrote, with ambiguities and equivocations so foreign to his habit as to seem the work of another hand.

Hearing Rachel's step in the room above he lifted his head and his face relaxed. She was singing—his Rachel, whom he had sworn to love and protect—one of the old ballads she loved. Dickinson must die before the Tennessee air would be sweet again. He pondered his letter anew, noting with satisfaction these words that flamed amid the irrelevant, colorless sentences that surrounded them:

"There are certain traits that always accompany the gentleman and man of truth. The moment he hears harsh expressions applied to a friend he will immediately communicate them, that explanation may take place, when the base poltroon and cowardly talebearer

will always act in the background. You can apply the latter to Mr. Dickinson and see which best fits him. I write it for his eye. And the latter I emphatically intend for him."

Swann, greatly disturbed, read and reread this with growing befuddlement. He evidently had not made himself clear to the general! Or—ungenerous assumption!—the general had been drunk when he wrote. He ran with the letter to Dickinson, a much cleverer man than he; but Dickinson, too, was bewildered by the verbiage and ambiguities of the general's communication. It was wholly unlike Jackson to slip an insult for one man into a letter directed to another.

Dickinson composed a reply, reviewing the history of the notes; a tame rejoinder, Swann thought, still smarting from the vicious thwack of Jackson's cane. But there was more to follow. He seized from the press that day's issue of the *Impartial Review* and flew with it to Dickinson, that his friend might read a communication from the Hermitage in which they were both savagely attacked. Swann found himself pleasantly described as the puppet and lying valet for a worthless, drunken, blackguard scoundrel.

The loungers at Winn's would not fail to note this tribute and Mr. Swann was not without his sensibilities. Having frequently sneered at Jackson as an illiterate person, Dickinson was astonished and enraged to find how neatly the lord of the Hermitage had turned off sentences that cut two ways.

No longer restrained by his father-in-law, he wrote a letter to the general promising to hold him responsi-

ble for his utterances; and another of the same tenor to the newspaper.

Whereupon, without waiting for his letter to be delivered, he departed for New Orleans with a cargo of slaves and cotton. Swann, having been grossly insulted and caned in his efforts to tell the world the truth about the horse-race, did not relish the idea of being left to support Charles Dickinson's cause when Dickinson saw fit to leave the rigors of a Tennessee winter for the salubrious airs of Louisiana. But Dickinson was already on the river.

Satisfied that Dickinson would return in the spring, Jackson noted that Swann's tongue continued to wag. Apparently half the men in the valley had taken sides in the controversy; the weekly issues of the *Impartial Review* bristled with letters; affidavits bearing upon the question of the notes filled many pockets.

Swann, though grieved by Dickinson's departure, found joy in the attention he was receiving. From eminent citizens of Virginia came letters certifying that he was a person of breeding, entitled to every consideration as a gentleman, but without effect upon the grim master of the Hermitage, whose remark—that if Thomas Swann was as big a fool with a pistol as he was with his tongue he wasn't worth killing—caused merriment in the taverns.

Among those who supported Swann's cause in the press during the epidemic of letter-writing was Nathaniel McNairy, who denounced Jackson as a swashbuckler and threw in a contemptuous word for John Coffee, Jackson's friend and partner in the Clover Bot-

tom store. Neither Coffee nor McNairy had been in any way connected with the horse-race, but a duel was arranged, the meeting occurred across the Kentucky border, and Coffee received a flesh wound in the thigh.

Out of this rose more trouble in which other Nashville citizens became involved, due to the base charge that McNairy had violated the code by bloodthirstily firing at *two* instead of waiting for *three* as a gentleman should. Jackson took no part in these new agitations of the Cumberland waters beyond visiting Coffee as that sturdy veteran of many battles lay in bed, to abuse him for having been drawn into a foolish quarrel fomented by the insufferable Swann.

Dickinson was back in April. His trip had been profitable and he had found the flesh-pots of New Orleans to his taste. The controversy over the horse-race had been obscured by pleasanter experiences and he was not pleased when he found that Swann had kept the pot simmering and that Nashville had anxiously awaited his own return to supply the fuel that would bring it to the boiling-point.

Confident as he was that he could shoot quicker and straighter than any other man in Tennessee, he had decided that it would not be to his advantage to kill Jackson. He expected to spend the remainder of his life in Nashville and the slaying of a man as popular as the general would not help his prospects. In his vexation at finding the horse-race still a live issue he would much rather have fought and killed Swann! But Swann, meddlesome fool, had been supporting his cause

and he couldn't repudiate him now. He feverishly read the back numbers of the *Impartial Review* and realized that he could not ignore the epithets Jackson had applied to him.

Cursing Swann's officiousness, it dawned upon him, as he sat down to reply to Jackson, that there was more in the general's animosity than appeared. Those spiteful comments he had made about Mrs. Jackson and the Robards divorce! That was months ago but here, he surmised, lay the real burden of his offending. Jackson, far shrewder than he had believed him to be, had, with nice calculation, chivalrously protecting his wife's name from gossip, so manipulated the petty affair of the forfeit money as to make it an excuse for forcing him to the field of honor.

The valley was waiting to hear from him and he composed a letter for the newspaper in which he denounced Jackson for refusing Swann satisfaction, charged the general with evasion and cowardice and made clear his own willingness to meet him on the field of honor. He closed haughtily with the announcement that he was leaving for Maryland the following week and any business the general might have with him required immediate attention.

Jackson, hastily summoned by the editor, read Dickinson's letter as it lay on the printer's case.

"Going to Maryland, is he? Seems to be the gentleman's habit to write letters and run away from the consequences. Mr. Dickinson will not go to Maryland!"

The circle of his vengeance was tightening about Dickinson. He wrote a challenge, found General

Thomas Overton, John's brother, and asked him to deliver it and make all arrangements for a meeting.

There was a quibble between Doctor Cattlet, Dickinson's second, and Overton as to the time.

"What! The scoundrel wants me to wait a week?" demanded Jackson, when this was reported to him. "I thought he was going to Maryland and wanted immediate accommodation!"

"Cattlet says he has no dueling pistols," Overton explained.

"Another of his lies—a subterfuge!" Jackson cried. "Swann's boasting that Dickinson's been practising all winter getting ready to kill me, and now he has no pistols!"

Dickinson was obdurate and refused to be hurried. The stipulations for the duel named the thirtieth of May as the time and fixed the scene on Red River, across the Kentucky border, beyond the reach of Tennessee law.

In the peace of the Hermitage Jackson told Rachel what impended; tried to make light of it as a thing of no importance—merely an inconvenience in view of the pressing work on the farms!

Brought up as she had been among men of high courage and daring, she uttered no word of protest; only moved nearer and took his hand.

"And all because of Truxton," she said, smiling bravely. "That young Mr. Swann seems to have started a lot of trouble. It seems so terrible that men must fight to settle differences. Perhaps if you could meet Mr. Dickinson you might settle it all peaceably."

"No chance of that. It's gone too far, my dear," he said kindly, grateful for her innocence. Thank God! she knew nothing of the fierce passion in his heart or what had kindled it.

That night a number of his friends rode out and she made a brave showing before them but soon retired, knowing that they had come to discuss the duel. Upstairs, crouching by the window, she watched the lightning dance along the horizon, heard the rustle of the wind in the trees and the voice of a negro in the slave quarters singing a plaintive song, and was oppressed by a great loneliness. There was something ominous in that subdued murmur of voices below.

In the days that intervened the duel was rarely referred to between them. Before him she betrayed no anxiety and he went about his affairs quite unconcernedly. He remained about the plantation more than was his habit; several times he asked her to ride with him, on the pretense that he wished to inspect land he thought of buying. He referred constantly to things they would do in the near future, as if no cloud darkened their sky. On one of their rides they passed Hunter's Hill, so sanctified by happy memories, and as he turned with some question he saw tears in her eyes.

"Not crying, my dear one!" he cried, checking his horse.

"Only happy tears, my dearest! Seeing the old place made me think how happy we've always been together!"

"And always will be! Our happiest times are yet to come!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CAVALIER FIGHTS A DUEL

ON THE morning before the day appointed for the duel he was abroad at daylight. It was a fifteen hours' ride to Red River and he was acting on Rachel's suggestion that he complete the journey in season to enjoy a refreshing sleep the night before the meeting. Her courage held to the moment of parting. An observer might have thought, as she bade him good-by on the veranda steps, that only a trivial affair was calling him away.

"God bless you, my husband."

"And keep you, my dear wife!"

He held her to his heart in a long embrace, and then releasing her, looked smilingly into her eyes.

"Do not fear for me. Have no dark thoughts as to the result. If I find the roads bad I may rest a day before starting back, but I shall return in safety."

She watched him mount and waved her hand as he turned at the gate for a last look before putting his horse to the gallop.

The two Overtons, Fowler, and several other friends, including a surgeon, were waiting when Jackson reached the rendezvous. They struck off toward the north, a dignified company, marked by a subdued businesslike air; one might have mistaken them for a party

of lawyers riding circuit. Thomas Overton, a veteran of the Revolution and an authority on all that pertained to the code, rode at Jackson's side discussing details of the encounter.

"Don't try to shoot first," he counseled. "I've watched Dickinson at target practise and he shoots quick. He's had a dummy of your figure set up in Erwin's corn field for a week to practise on and he's bragged that he'll aim at a button over your heart and drive it through you. You might fool him about that. When you step to the line let your coat fall back and hang loose."

"No, sir! I shall do nothing of the kind! I'm not going to play any baby tricks in this business! It's going to be a clean affair according to the code."

As they made their way quietly over the rough road farmers along the way began to give them reports of the passing of Dickinson and his party. Accompanied by a large retinue, Dickinson had started an hour earlier. They were making a lark of the journey, singing ribald songs and jesting as to the fate in store for Jackson. They paused frequently to set up targets for Dickinson to puncture.

"The fool thinks he can scare me," remarked Jackson after inspecting a series of these evidences of Dickinson's marksmanship. He reined in his horse and extended his hand that his companions might note its steadiness.

"Let Dickinson wear himself out," growled Overton. "His conceit won't help him any when he toes the mark."

"He bet five hundred dollars he'd kill me. I've got a long list of cowardly braggarts who've sworn to kill me," said Jackson. "There's a nest of 'em over at Knoxville."

"Sevier's crowd," observed Overton. "Kill Dickinson and you've killed them all."

Jackson's party found lodging at Dave Miller's tavern, and Dickinson and his entourage established themselves at Harrison's, some distance away. Jackson ate a substantial supper and over his pipe discussed politics. His friends were amazed at his serenity.

The next morning when Overton went down to the public room he found Jackson placidly reading an old copy of the Philadelphia *Gazetteer*. The landlord gave them coffee, and at six they set out for the dueling ground, an isolated spot across Red River, a mile from the tavern.

No one accompanied them but the Nashville surgeon, as Overton said the fewer witnesses present the better. The ferryman not appearing, Jackson impatiently urged his horse down the bank and across the stream, calling to his companions to follow. He was in one of his rare light moods, joking with Overton as they followed the rough trail through the woods.

They were first on the field but Dickinson with Cattlet and two other friends arrived a few minutes later. The traditional courtesies were punctiliously exchanged, the principals saluting by lifting their hats, but no words passed.

The distance—twenty-four feet—was carefully

measured off and pegs driven as markers in a smooth meadow surrounded by a heavy growth of poplars. Overton and Cattlet conferred in businesslike tones perfectly audible to the principals. Dickinson sat on a log as he waited, impassive, quite as if the proceedings did not greatly interest him. Jackson, equally indifferent, raised his head to follow the flight of a cardinal that crossed the field like a flash of flame. Dickinson laughed ironically when Cattlet, giving the ground a last inspection, picked up a few broken twigs and flung them aside.

"You don't think this is a running match, do you, Cattlet?" he asked with a smile that disclosed his large, even white teeth.

Dickinson won the toss for position, which meant that Jackson must face the sun. This was accepted without comment and the preparations proceeded with mechanical precision, as if the affair were a part of some common routine. The dew still sparkled in the grass; a light breeze stirred the treetops. The seconds inspected the pistols, expressed their satisfaction and handed them to the principals, who at once took their positions.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?"

Dickinson moved slightly, relaxing his shoulders, giving a twitch to his stock. Jackson remained immovable, the pistol at his side.

"Fire!" cried Overton in his high shrill voice.

As quick as lightning Dickinson's arm rose and his weapon cracked sharply as it discharged.

"God!" muttered Overton under his breath.

He was watching Jackson intently. A flutter of dust —barely perceptible—on Jackson's coat just below one of the big buttons had indicated where the ball struck. Jackson raised his left arm unhurriedly and laid it tightly across his chest. He had not flinched or wavered and his inexorable eyes gave no sign of pain; but his jaw tightened as his teeth gripped a bullet he had put in his mouth—a common practise of duelists to avoid biting their tongues in a paroxysm of pain in case they were hit.

Dickinson, his eyes on his adversary, let his pistol drop to his side. In his consternation, mystified, awed by the erect, implacable figure before him, he involuntarily stepped back a pace.

"Back to the peg, sir!" cried Overton.

"I beg your pardon, sir," Dickinson muttered and resumed his place.

Jackson, his left arm still supporting his breast, raised his pistol slowly and pulled the trigger, but the weapon stopped at half-cock. Under the rules this was not to count as a shot, and he drew back the hammer, took deliberate aim and fired.

Silence held the world. The little puff of smoke from the muzzle of the pistol was caught up and borne away languidly on the breeze. No one spoke or moved. Dickinson, dropping his pistol, broke the moment's tension just as it became intolerable. He turned his head slowly, gazing about him with distended, startled eyes. Suddenly his look of bewilderment passed and his face was distorted in agony. His head went down as if he had received a blow, and fell into Cattlet's arms.

In the shade of the wood they laid him down and pillowed his head with their coats. The surgeons tore away his clothing saw the gaping wound, conferred in whispers. He was shot through the bowels, the ball passing clear through the body. Nothing could be done for him; inevitably he would bleed to death.

"Come away," said Overton, gently touching Jackson's arm. "There's nothing we can do."

As they were mounting their horses Overton suddenly cried out in alarm.

"What's that, General? Are you hit?" He pointed to Jackson's shirt, wet with blood, and to stains on his breeches. Blood in disturbing volume was coursing down his leg.

"Only a trifle," Jackson replied impatiently. "For God's sake don't let him have the satisfaction of knowing he hit me!"

"You'd better rest here while I dress your wound," said Jackson's surgeon.

"I'm not hurt, I tell you!" Jackson protested angrily. "I'll not whimper over any wound that scoundrel could give me."

"Poor devil!" muttered Overton. "He never doubted that he would kill you."

"When it comes my time to die I'll die," Jackson flared, "and not a day sooner. That was my mother's religion, and it's my wife's, and by the eternal God! I believe it. Where's my horse?"

They rode slowly back to the tavern. In the yard he caught sight of a negress churning on the kitchen porch and asked for a cup of buttermilk, drank it

greedily and, urged by Overton, went to his room and submitted himself to the doctor. At noon he sent one of his company to inquire as to Dickinson's condition and to tender the services of his own surgeon.

"There's a bottle of brandy in my greatcoat," he said to Fowler. "Take it to Dickinson; it may ease his last hours."

Throughout a day of agony Dickinson cursed the man who had given him his mortal wound. Toward nightfall he mercifully became unconscious and at nine o'clock he was dead.

Jackson stubbornly rejected his surgeon's advice, reinforced by the plea of Overton and Fowler, that he remain at the tavern while his wound healed.

"I'm going home to-morrow—at sunup!" he announced when he heard the news that Dickinson was dead. "There'll be talk about this business, and I'll not have people think I'm afraid to face it."

"We'll take care of the critics," said Overton. "Everything was regular and according to the code. No duel was ever carried out more fairly."

"Overton," said Jackson impressively, raising himself on his elbow, "I'd have killed that man if he'd shot me through the brain!"

He would ride his horse home, as he had come, he declared, when they proposed that he travel in a wagon.

"I'll not be carried home in a damned litter!"

He was weak from loss of blood and his breast ached where the bullet had cracked his ribs and dug a furrow across his chest; but when they started he sat his saddle like a trooper and uttered no word of complaint.

It was late in the night when they reached the Hermitage, but lights glimmered through the shutters —Rachel's lights!

"You can leave me here," said Jackson at the gate that opened into the long tree-lined avenue that led to the door.

His friends begged to accompany him into the house, as there might be some service they could render him. But he would have none of this; Rachel might be alarmed. By the eternal God! he would cross the threshold into his own house alone, giving no outward sign of his injury!

They dismounted and followed a little way, saw his gaunt figure limned in the light as the door opened, heard Rachel's joyous cry as she gathered him in her arms.

At Winn's tavern Mr. Thomas Swann, highly certified as a perfect gentleman, found himself designated as a member of the committee of friends appointed to ride toward Harrison's Mills to serve as escort for the body of Charles Dickinson, which had begun its homeward journey in an emigrant wagon.

Rachel's gentle persuasions and not the doctor's orders kept Jackson in bed. The wound which the fretful patient declared to be the merest scratch was more serious than he realized or would admit. Time was required for the healing of the gouge in his breast and for the knitting of the broken ribs.

"There's a thousand things I ought to be doing and could do well enough," he grumbled when Rachel,

giving him breakfast, so arranged his pillows that he could look out over the fields. "But I reckon I'll have to obey orders." He clasped her hand and smiled at her in a way that belied his gruff tone. His deep gratification that he had destroyed her calumniator was intensified in the peaceful hours she spent at his bedside, talking to him of farm affairs and giving him the news of the valley folk. She read to him out of the Shakespeare Fowler had given them, and he would stop her to fix in his mind for future use phrases he fancied. *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth* were his favorites. "Men don't change much," he observed repeatedly. "I reckon scoundrels and cowards have been the same breed from the beginning of time. It's strange how the same sort of sculduggery keeps going right on!"

A new tenderness was in his heart; he had never before felt so deeply his dependence upon her. That foul slanderer would never again assail her! He was satisfied that he had managed the thing so well that she would never suspect that it was not that unimportant controversy over the horse-race but a foul imputation against her character that was responsible for the duel.

No remorse troubled him. He was not a man who saw ghosts. There was one less scoundrel in the world —that was his view of it. The same pistol that had killed Dickinson lay there in the high-boy, oiled and loaded, for use if any other slanderer dared to say aught against his Rachel.

Even with all her efforts to keep him quiet and her pleading with the friends she permitted to see him not

to arouse him by any report of the comment in the town, he managed to extract from Overton the temper of the talk in Nashville.

"Of course, Dickinson's friends are bitter," Overton cautiously admitted, "but we're looking out for your interests. They can't get far with the whimper that the duel wasn't according to the strict letter of the code. That man hadn't the slightest doubt of his ability to kill you before you could raise your pistol. Drunk or sober that was his boast. He had promised his friends a big celebration when it was over. They're pretending you had no right to a second trial after your pistol missed fire; but they made no protest on the field and they're not going to get very far with it now."

"I'll call any man out who says I took advantage! Tell 'em that!" cried Jackson, his eyes glittering. He sat up for this deliverance and the effort gave him a twinge that sent him back with a groan.

Nashville continued to vibrate. The duel obscured all other affairs on the Cumberland and as soon as the news reached East Tennessee Jackson's more virulent enemies in that quarter were blasphemous in their expressions of disgust that he had come off victor in the fight. Jackson's luck never turned! They were so enraged that they went the length of denouncing Dickinson, now buried in Captain Erwin's yard over yonder at Nashville, for his poor marksmanship.

Jackson, between the cool sheets of the four-poster at the Hermitage, manifested an uncanny knowledge of what was going on. Knowing well-nigh every man, woman and child between the Big Bend of the Cumber-

land and the Smokies it was not difficult for him to surmise what his enemies were saying. The man he had once caught trying to take a pot-shot at him from ambush was not far wrong in saying that Andy Jackson had eyes in the back of his head. In his musings all he asked was that his enemies should meet him in the open where he could deal with them properly.

Rachel kept him fairly tranquil for a few days after his home-coming and then the peace was broken by news, extracted by the invalid from Tom Overton, that a number of citizens had held a meeting in Nashville, passed resolutions deploring Dickinson's death, and signed a request to the editor of the *Impartial Review* that the paper in its forthcoming issue display signs of mourning for their friend. Seventy-three citizens had been moved to sign this petition.

"Seventy-three scoundrels!" Jackson sat up on the instant. "I'm going to know who those men are! Put the paper in mourning for Charles Dickinson as an affront to me! That's what it means! They'd give the impression that I was in the wrong. I wonder if they'd have put the paper in black if Dickinson had killed me as he bragged he would!"

"You're taking it all wrong," Overton expostulated. "It's only a natural thing to do. Captain Erwin's friends inspired this. And there's a good deal of sympathy with Dickinson's wife; she's soon to become a mother. That's had some influence in this matter. I don't believe that the request carries any enmity toward you."

"Bring me paper and ink!" Jackson ordered im-

patiently. "I'll write a letter to the editor asking for a list of these mourning citizens."

He was not to be thwarted. Even Rachel's appeal that he let the matter rest did not turn him. He would demand the names of the gentlemen who were so anxious that reversed column rules should express public grief at Dickinson's passing.

His letter, duly delivered, caused a scurrying in Nashville. Twenty-six of the signers, hearing the growl of the wounded lion at the Hermitage, hastened to the newspaper office and deleted their names. The editor diplomatically printed the resolutions with the names of the more courageous signers and turned the column rules; but he also printed Jackson's letter! Among the names that stood of those who wished to make public expression of their sorrow was that of the valiant Thomas Swann, gentleman, late of Virginia, whose zeal for truth had destroyed his friend while he himself suffered no punishment beyond the sting of Jackson's cane.

CHAPTER XXIV

COLONEL BURR CAUSES UNEASINESS

A DIFFICULT summer for Rachel. Distress over the duel and the new crop of animosities that followed it, the affairs of the farm, the old debts caused by the Allison failure were a heavy drain upon her health and spirit. Her lord's recovery was greatly retarded by his impatience to be up and about ferreting out his enemies and bringing them to book. She knew better than he the unfavorable comment abroad over the result of the duel. The members of her family kept her advised of it that she might not abate her efforts to hold the warrior at home. Hays and Fowler were just now her best counselors. If Jackson were to assail all of Dickinson's partisans he would be drawn constantly into war and he might not come off so easily in another duel. Hays, blunt soldier, told his sister-in-law frankly that the longer Jackson could be prevailed upon to remain quietly at home the better. Talk of that old trouble with Sevier was revived by the governor's friends, who were not slow to point to the death of Dickinson as only another indication of Jackson's unreasoning ferocity.

"One thing's certain," said Hays in private talk with Rachel, "this Dickinson business has put Andy out of politics. He can never be elected to office again."

"I'm glad of that!" Rachel replied heartily. "If there's no war and he keeps out of politics how happy we could be! Since the duel I've thought a great deal about all these things. You know, Bob, he wouldn't do anything to hurt me, and I try not to let him know how I worry about him! He holds his honor so sacred that he can't overlook an injury no matter how slight it is. I sometimes think it was too bad he was pushed forward so fast. We'd be a lot better off if he'd never held any of the offices the people gave him. I thought when he got the major-generalship he'd be content. He likes soldiering and I think every one admits that he's done well with the militia. But every time he puts on his uniform I feel the dread of war!"

"It may come," Hays conceded. "The major-generalship gives him a chance to work off his surplus energy and I hope he'll be satisfied with that. If war should come he'll have the chance he wants, and you'll have to be brave about it."

"Why must there be war and hatred in the world!" she exclaimed plaintively. "I thought after the colonies won independence there'd be peace. I've never known a time when some danger didn't threaten. Always the Indians from the time I was a child, and they still threaten us! And now it seems we are not sure of peace with any country!"

"It's the price we pay for trying to set up a new nation. Just now I think a war that would take Andy's mind off his enemies in Tennessee might be a good thing!"

* * *

She was not pleased when Burr reappeared. Her valiant spouse was up and about again, and the little colonel with his maps and war talk disturbed the atmosphere just when she was thanking God for a period of peace.

During the spring, clouded by the difficulties with Swann and Dickinson, several letters had reached the Hermitage from Burr. Jackson had displayed these to Rachel as evidence of Burr's honorable motives and patriotic interest in the welfare of the Southwest. Burr thought so well of the Tennesseans that he had suggested to his correspondent the advisability of augmenting the state's militia forces. If Jackson would prepare a list of officers for two new regiments—fellows fit for business, as he put it, the colonel promised to propose the new organizations to the War Department.

All plausible enough; Rachel was obliged to admit that these friendly communications were creditable to the former vice-president's anxious concern for the nation's welfare.

The colonel reached Nashville in September, just as Jackson, now able to sit a horse again, was eager for diversion. Again, the guest-room was put at the colonel's disposal and he was once more welcomed with all dignity by the lord of the manor. Rachel, hiding her prejudices, omitted nothing that could add to the colonel's ease. Jackson at once dispatched a messenger to town to apprise Robertson, Overton and other friends among the leading citizens of Burr's return and urged them to call upon him. His activities having long been cramped by his injuries, Jackson was ready for

excitement. As Rachel had been keeping him at home under the pretext that his wound demanded quiet, his social nature warmed at the opportunity afforded by Burr's presence for giving a ball in the distinguished guest's honor. And, incidentally, he would have a chance to meet the gaze of those citizens who had expressed indignation over the duel.

The banquet that had marked Burr's first visit paled in the splendor of the ball, which gave the women as well as the men of the Cumberland an opportunity to look upon the famous pilgrim from the East. The representative men of the valley were there with their wives and daughters—as handsome a company as had ever assembled on the frontier. With sound dramatic instinct Jackson delayed convoying his illustrious guest to the festal scene until the company had assembled and was keyed to a proper pitch of expectancy. Rachel, already there as one of the reception committee, was a trifle anxious, noting the presence of men who might take the occasion to manifest their animosity toward her husband. But when he appeared in his major-general's uniform arm in arm with the former vice-president the heartiness of the applause calmed her fears. If the little colonel, insignificant but for the dignified bearing that marked him as a gentleman of high quality, looked the personage he was, the lord of the Hermitage, his height emphasized by his close fitting uniform, was not less a compelling target for admiring eyes.

Burr gallantly led Rachel first of all into the dance; a gracious gentleman, as punctilious on the frontier in

observing the social niceties as in a brilliant court. In the course of the evening he made occasion to speak to all the company—praise of the country, praise of its hospitality, and to every woman some compliment or pleasantry that she would treasure to repeat to her grandchildren.

Though alert for any sign of unfriendliness on the part of Dickinson's friends Jackson saw nothing at which to take offense. He was proud of his people and gratified by their kindly attentions to his guest.

"Our community is doing itself proud," Jackson remarked to General Robertson, "and Colonel Burr is enjoying himself. He has a sincere interest in the West and the warmest affection for our people. He has expressed to me his great liking for you, sir. I'm proud that he appreciates what you have meant to this country."

Robertson, soldier, seasoned pioneer, a man without illusions, frowned.

"Colonel Burr is a man of talents," he remarked a little grudgingly. "No one can help liking him; but I don't quite understand his actions. He carries no credentials from the government to justify his zealous interest in the national defense; yet President Jefferson must be as much concerned as he in these matters he talks about so glibly. He talked to me mostly of a settlement he proposes to plant in the Washita country; preparation for war seems only incidental and pretty hazy in his head."

"There's nothing irreconcilable between his colonizing schemes and his interest in preparing for war,"

said Jackson defensively. "He naturally doesn't want to plant a settlement in the lower country if the Spaniards are likely to drive him out. Fowler shares your doubts about Burr; he warned me against committing myself to any of his schemes when Burr paid us his first visit."

"Fowler's a man of good judgment," replied Robertson soberly. "Preparing for war is one thing but schemes for setting up a separate government and invading Mexico are treasonable. We've got to have a care; I'm for waiting to see which way the cat jumps before we go any further with him."

"We have no right to impute bad motives to Burr!" declared Jackson. "What's happened to rouse your suspicions?"

"An old friend of mine, Captain Waybring, an officer in the regular army, was here only to-day and hurried off to investigate Burr's doings in Kentucky and Indiana. He would have seen you but Burr's presence at your house barred him. He had a note of introduction from a friend of yours—Colonel Norton—which I was to deliver."

They had withdrawn to a side room where the music of flute and violin proclaimed the joy of the Cumberland in the little colonel's presence. Robertson was little given to silly speculations or suspicions, and Jackson was not pleased by his remarks on Burr. He broke the seal of Norton's letter which, after commending the bearer as a person worthy of confidence, concluded with these words:

"Serious apprehensions are entertained at the capital over the movements of a certain personage now in your part of the country. I advise that you listen to what he has to say; but avoid committing yourself to his enterprises."

"The work of Burr's political enemies!" said Jackson with a snarl as he thrust the letter into his pocket. "Jefferson hates Burr and wants to destroy him. I will convict no man without strong evidence that he's a scoundrel. Let us return to the ballroom."

The distinguished guest thoroughly ingratiated himself with the gay company. But Jackson, with all his disdain for the questions raised as to Burr's true motives, was not a little troubled. Both Robertson and Fowler suspected some sinister motive in these western cruises. Rachel did not like Burr, and behind her dark lustrous eyes an excellent mind did a great deal of thinking; and Rachel's judgments and intuitions had very often been justified by events.

In a few days Burr moved on, never knowing that grave suspicions as to his actions, whispered in Washington, were winging their way through the languid September air along the courses of the western rivers. But, Jackson, passionately loyal where once he had given his friendship, was not yet ready to believe that Burr meditated any assault upon the peace or unity of the republic. He showed Norton's warning to Rachel and repeated what Robertson had said.

"It's a serious thing to injure a man's reputation, even by innuendo," he said, "and we have no reason to

assume that Burr is not an honorable man. God knows I have suffered enough from enemies; and Burr has been unfortunate. Hamilton hated him and connived to keep him out of the presidency. Burr naturally turns to the West. He has a fine sympathy with the pioneers, and he wants the government to protect them."

"Yes, my dear," Rachel replied with a smile. "Colonel Burr is a likable man, I grant you. There's much in what you say, but we'll wait and see what comes of all his traveling."

At the Clover Bottom store Jackson, with a flourish, laid before John Coffee important letters from Burr. It was now November and the colonel was in Kentucky, making friends and interesting the people in his schemes.

"He's sent bank-notes for thirty-five hundred dollars," said Jackson, "and he wants boats—five of 'em and provisions. I guess he knows what he's about! If he had any treasonable purposes he wouldn't be buying supplies in this open fashion."

Coffee frowned as he read the letters which carefully specified the size of the boats required and the nature of the supplies.

"I don't like the looks of this thing!" he exclaimed testily. "Robertson doesn't swallow Burr's story of what he means to do and Fowler doesn't trust him. There are whispers in Nashville that he's up to some scheme for dividing the country."

"Burr," replied Jackson hotly, "is a man of brains—one of the ablest men in the country. He's not fool enough to attempt treason against the United States.

I have no patience with Robertson's suspicions. Jefferson is trying to ruin Burr; that's all there is of that."

He flung upon the table the Kentucky bank-notes Burr had sent in advance payment.

"The story Burr told me is perfectly consistent. He means to start a colony on the Washita, and if we have war with Spain he'll be ready to take a hand in it. He never hinted at anything else in his talks with me."

"All right; I'm satisfied if you are," Coffee grudgingly assented. "We'll build the boats. But if Burr is bent on mischief we want to keep our hands clean. If his scheme is dishonorable——"

"Then, by the Eternal God! I'll be the first to denounce him!" cried Jackson.

In the crisp wintry air a large force of carpenters was busy at Stone's River building scows to Burr's order when Jackson, directing the laborers from the saddle, was surprised by the abrupt appearance of Norton. The officer had arrived at Nashville that morning and had ridden at once in quest of Jackson. Their greetings over, Norton pointed to the boats.

"Things look prosperous here. Some new enterprise?" he inquired.

"A commission from Colonel Burr," Jackson replied, instantly on the defensive. "I got your letter but I have no reason to believe that Burr's up to any mischief. He's going to the Washita to found a settlement. If there's a war with Spain he would naturally want to have a hand in it."

"That's his story is it? Well, other stories are afloat in the East. The impression's abroad that Burr's

in a conspiracy of some sort to divide the country and set up an empire."

"If that's in his mind he's not breathed it to me! I'll swear he never uttered a treasonable word to me! Jefferson's trying to crush Burr. It's only his damned political jealousy and hatred."

Norton, astride the horse that had brought him from the Nashville tavern, stroked his cheek reflectively.

"I don't see it that way. There's more to this thing than you know. Where there's so much smoke there's bound to be a little fire. I'm following Burr around to see what he's up to, but I'm damned tired of being used as a spy! I wish we'd fight Spain and be done with it. General Wilkinson is mixed up in this; he and Burr have been sleeping in the same bed."

"Wilkinson is a damned scoundrel," cried Jackson. "He turned against Washington in the darkest hours of the Revolution. I'm surprised that Burr could be fooled by such a rogue!"

"We speak in confidence," said Norton quietly. "It's a fact that Wilkinson has been in the pay of the king of Spain for three years."

"I can well believe it!" cried Jackson. "The last time I saw him in Philadelphia he was swelled up like a poisoned cow. It's an outrage that the government gives the most important command in the army to such a rogue. Come to my house; I want to talk to you about this thing."

Before a crackling fire at the Hermitage Jackson related in detail his various conversations with Burr.

"He may be holding something back, but if he is he's

mighty smart about it. The worst thing you've said about him is his alliance with Wilkinson. I've never heard a creditable thing about that fellow. What's the matter with those people in Washington that they trust him with high command? No scheme for dividing the country could succeed without his treachery. God pity Burr if he's plotting with that fat swine! I'd wager a mile-square of land that if it comes to the pinch you'll find Wilkinson betraying his friend to save his own leperous skin."

"But what about these boats and recruits for his expedition?" asked Norton. "Burr knows the law and a private citizen can't organize expeditions against a foreign power without inviting serious punishment for his meddlesomeness. I'd be careful about countenancing the colonel too far. We've got to remember that he's a beaten man and now that he can no longer aspire to the presidency his greed for power may lead him into mischief. I don't think the government so far wrong in watching Burr. When a man of his ability finds himself thwarted in his ambitions at one point he's bound to break loose somewhere else. You've got a fine body of militia here and if he really means to undertake an independent assault on Mexico he'd be mighty glad of your help."

Jackson's eyes blazed wrathfully.

"My God! do you think I'm fool enough to fall into a trap like that—take the troops of my state on a filibuster! I tell you Burr has never proposed such a thing to me! By God! if he did I'd put him under arrest! But let's be fair to him. I'm in the merchan-

dising business and my selling him boats and provisions has nothing whatever to do with my position as militia officer. But I'll have a care——"

The two men rose as Rachel entered the room.

"What did I hear?" she asked smilingly. "Did my husband say he would have a care!"

"You and Colonel Norton are both trying to scare me about Colonel Burr's intentions," said Jackson as he placed a chair for her.

"Colonel Burr is a beautiful talker and dancer," remarked Rachel with a caution that caused both men to laugh.

"He's probably the best talker in America," said Colonel Norton. "It's not what he says that's disturbing; it's the things he doesn't say that are causing sleepless nights in certain quarters."

"He talks too much about war for my comfort," said Rachel. "I don't know any women in Tennessee who are anxious for war. We've heard nothing else since we were children."

"That's all too true, Mrs. Jackson," Norton replied. "I'm surprised that you countenance me when all my visits have been in search of war signs. I'd resign from the army to escape further spy duty if the government didn't insist that I'm of use. I hate the work but somebody's got to do it. By the way, General, I suppose you're one of the men who tell their wives everything? You recall our friend Lady Melderode?"

"Oh, yes; I know about Lady Melderode," said Rachel with a smile that disposed of the idea that her husband kept any secrets from her.

"Remember, sir, it was you who brought me to her ladyship's attention," laughed Jackson.

"I'm guilty. But I'll explain myself to Mrs. Jackson. Yonder in Philadelphia our government was using me to get information, and this woman was suspected of deriving some of her income from the Spanish envoy."

"A puppy; a contemptible puppy!" Jackson ejaculated.

"The gentleman referred to is Don Carlos Martinez de Yrujo, the most gorgeous of diplomats," Norton elucidated. "Lady Melderode and the colonel were—and no doubt—still are—very good friends. I never believed the lady was over here looking for her husband. There are always women like that in the capitals of the world picking up information for any government that will pay for the accommodation. She made a cruise of the West last year about the time Colonel Burr was first inspecting these western rivers. I dare say she pretended to be in quest of her husband. A good excuse, that! Even after the British envoy refused longer to accept any responsibility for her ladyship she still insisted that she was in America with a broken heart, seeking her errant husband who may or may not exist. I have heard of her here and there as cruising about in close proximity to Burr."

Rachel, busy with her knitting, did not risk a glance at Jackson.

"Oh, Mrs. Jackson knows all I know and suspected about her," said Jackson. "The woman was here last May. She was following Burr about—rather closely."

"Yes; I learned that along the Ohio. But it was a

very circumspect arrangement. She had her own barge. I understood that she did not visit Nashville."

"She did—but briefly," laughed Jackson. "I advised her not to tarry."

"You ordered her away!" Norton exclaimed.

"Certainly. Colonel Burr was here at our house. We had no room to entertain her. She was in Nashville only an hour. I suppose she'll die hating me for telling her to move along."

"That's what our Washington authorities have never had the courage to do—even after they knew she was a dangerous spy. For myself I shouldn't want the job of telling her she wasn't a desirable visitor of the country. She's a serpent and a dangerous one."

"Not so dangerous; just a poor, foolish woman," said Jackson, peering into his pipe bowl. "I suppose she went on south. I'll say for her that she's a thoroughbred. I didn't tell Burr she was in Nashville. And when he came back he didn't refer to her."

"She'd be the first to betray him if he gets caught. She's a born traitor," remarked Norton.

"She may not be so bad," remarked Rachel meditatively. "I'm not sure Mr. Jackson did right in sending her away. Even if she's wicked she needs friends all the more for that."

"She's an impudent creature, not easily put down," Jackson declared. "After I'd put her on her boat she threw me a kiss and hinted that we'd meet again."

"I reckon she was trying to make the best of it," said Rachel the charitable. "A woman like that needs our prayers more than blame."

CHAPTER XXV

THE CAVALIER IS INDIGNANT

JACKSON accompanied Norton to town and roused Coffee from his bed to hear the officer's story.

Coffee, with a bearskin drawn about his shoulders, growled and grumbled as Norton repeated the gossip of Washington and the stories he had picked up along the Ohio as to Colonel Burr's performances.

"I know you were against accepting Burr's money in the first place," said Jackson magnanimously. "I confess he may have taken me in. But I repeat, and by God I'm ready to swear, that he never said a word to me that was tainted with treason. And always it's been his Washita colony and his wish to assist our government in case we fight Spain. He's got Patten Anderson interested to the extent of raising a company of young fellows to go down the river with him and my own nephew is going along. Anderson's an honorable man. If there's any wrong he doesn't know it!"

"If Burr's a scoundrel we're not going to be mixed up in his affairs," declared Coffee. "Your enemies are mine, Jackson; and they'd be damned glad to see us floundering in the net when it's pulled."

"I can't believe Burr contemplates treason!" protested Jackson. "But what Norton tells us has a black look. Things have come to a fine pass when an of-

ficer of the army can even be suspected of plotting against the country. Wilkinson should be shot! I've never believed any good of that fellow."

They would be cautious; caution was imperatively demanded. They agreed that the delivery of the boats and provisions at Clover Bottom would depend on what further they heard as to Burr's proceedings.

Jackson accompanied Norton to his barge, then, swinging his lantern savagely, found his horse and rode back to the Hermitage. Treason eating into the heart of the nation! He would demand explanations of Burr before giving him a single boat or a pound of provisions. Tennessee should not be smirched by the touch of any traitorous hand!

He slept badly but was up when the gray dawn broke, busily writing—a letter to Burr telling him of the rumors afloat; another to Claiborne, Governor of Louisiana, hinting at an assault upon New Orleans. When his blood was afire he found delight in literary composition, experimenting with phrases to get the effect he wanted, which was to put Claiborne on his guard without mentioning Burr. He did not, however, scruple to mention Wilkinson because of that gentleman's control of the military forces on which Claiborne must rely for defense. Rachel's readings from Shakespeare had enriched his vocabulary and given him some excellent phrases. He smiled with satisfaction as they slipped from his quill.

"I fear there is something rotten in the state of Denmark," he wrote. "Beware the month of December: . . . This I write for your own eyes and for your own

safety; profit by it and the Ides of March remember."

Rachel listened with a smile on her face as he read the letter aloud, lifting his hand solemnly for emphasis as he rolled out sentences that gave him special satisfaction. The swift working of his eager questing mind was only one of his many fascinations for her. She never ceased to marvel at him.

"I reckon nobody could fail to understand what you mean, my dear," she said, rising to stroke his cheek. "You have a wonderful way of finding just the right words."

To President Jefferson he indited another letter, warmly patriotic, declaring that in case of assault upon the peace and dignity of the United States in any quarter his Tennesseans would be ready to march on the briefest notice.

"I want Thomas Jefferson to know Tennessee isn't asleep," he remarked after this communication also had received Rachel's approval.

Jackson, at least, was not asleep. The friends to whom he showed his letters—Robertson, Coffee, Fowler, Overton—all heartily approved.

His conscience was clear and he now went about his private affairs. He was away from home when Overton rode to the Hermitage with the latest news of the little colonel, who had been arrested, tried and acquitted of a charge of treason in Kentucky. His defense was conducted by a young Kentuckian hitherto unknown to the larger world: Henry Clay by name.

Rachel listened gravely as Overton told of the failure of the case against Burr.

"He may be an innocent man," she said, "but if he comes back here in Mr. Jackson's absence what shall I say to him?"

"Be guarded; it's lucky Andy's away. Colonel Burr could hardly expect you to entertain him here in your husband's absence."

A few days later Burr appeared at the Hermitage, suave as ever, but Rachel's discerning eyes noted the lines of care newly written on his face. His acquittal by the Kentucky court had brought him no sense of triumph. His enemies would only be stirred to more savage attacks upon him; and he was aware that he had told a great variety of stories in his travels, stupidly trusting people who might easily betray him.

"I am merely paying a call of courtesy," he said when Rachel received him. "I am already established at the Clover Bottom tavern."

The marked reserve with which Rachel greeted him was only a hint of what he must expect, but he would keep his flag flying. Unless Wilkinson proved false he would beat down the men who were plotting against him.

He liked admiration and was piqued that this dark little country woman so evidently distrusted him. The purity that shone in her handsome eyes was disturbing. Not so long ago fame had been leading him on; but the devils of ill fortune were now on his track in full cry. In the few minutes that he sat before the blazing logs, uncomfortable in the knowledge that he was unwelcome, he was beset by fears of impending disaster. Rachel, seeing that he was keenly disap-

pointed not to find her husband at home, explained that Mr. Coffee could no doubt answer for Mr. Jackson as to any matters of business.

"Oh, yes; Mr. Coffee," remarked Burr indifferently.

He did not say that Coffee had received him frostily and that he was anxious to appeal from the big burly giant of a partner to the head of the firm. Rachel was a little sorry for him as he left. She watched him from the window as he walked spiritlessly to his horse, seemingly shrunken in his greatcoat, and rode away.

When Jackson returned he declared at once his purpose to see Burr and demand explanations. The interview took place in the tavern with Tom Overton present.

"Let us deal frankly with our affairs, Colonel Burr," Jackson began. "The country is full of rumor and speculation as to your plans. I have no wish to wound your feelings, but I and my associates are entitled to know just what use you intend to make of the boats we have built to your order. We are ready to deliver everything you require; but pardon me if I say that these boats shall not leave here if you meditate any use of them contrary to the laws of our country."

"I am glad to answer your questions, General Jackson," Burr replied. "I have told you the truth about my plans. The East is full of rumors of war; the powers at Washington only trifle with a dangerous situation. There has been no change in my plans for establishing a colony on the Washita. And as that country is certain to be invaded by the Spaniards if war comes I have thought only of the danger to our nation and not un-

naturally of my investment in land there and the men who promise to join the colony."

"But the story's abroad that you are assembling arms and military stores! That you have enlisted men all along the Ohio and propose invading Mexico."

"Lies! All lies!" exclaimed Burr with heat. "It's been said that I propose a dissolution of the Union—another infamous fabrication! I do not own a musket or a bayonet! I was advised by a man close to the federal administration that it is desirable to have the Orleans territory west of the Mississippi settled as rapidly as possible. Ten thousand men was the suggestion made. But one hundred or one hundred and fifty are all who have promised to accompany me there to begin the settlement. Twice I was taken into court in Kentucky on suspicion of being engaged in a treasonable enterprise and twice discharged. Mr. Clay, who undertook my defense, is an honorable man who has just been recognized as such by his election to the United States Senate. He certainly would not have supported my cause if he even remotely suspected me of treason."

Under stress of strong emotion he rose and gripped the back of his chair.

"Gentlemen, I appreciate your own situation and sympathize with it. We can, if you so desire, terminate our business arrangements here and now, and I'll not touch the property you have collected for me. But I swear that your suspicions are unjustified." His lips quivered; there was a hint of tears in his gray eyes as he went on brokenly. "I fought for American indepen-

dence, and in the civil offices bestowed upon me by the favor of my countrymen I have striven—perhaps not always with wisdom, but honestly—to lift my country high among the nations. It is with deep mortification that I find myself treated as if I were some slinking charlatan."

"I regret this situation," said Jackson kindly, touched by Burr's agitation, yet not wholly convinced.

"Jackson is right in asking assurances as to your projects," said Overton. "As the head of our militia he would lay himself open to the gravest censure if he became involved in any undertaking that was tainted with treason. But I am willing to leave it to your own honor whether you allow him to deliver the boats and merchandise you ordered."

"I thank you, sir," Burr replied, evidently touched by Overton's appeal to his honor. "It means much, gentlemen, for a man as sore beset as I am to be met in this spirit. I can hardly give stronger assurance as to my intentions than I have already done. It is important that I proceed with all expedition to the Washita, for the men who are trusting their future to me in that venture are eager to be off. It will serve my purpose if I take two of the boats I ordered and only such provisions as they will carry."

Jackson and Overton conferred without leaving the room. Overton suggested that Jackson was sufficiently protected in the transaction by Burr's letters and written orders. It was a strictly business matter. They went to the store for Coffee's consent, which was grudgingly given. Two boats and a part of the provisions were to

be delivered, and Jackson returned the amount due Burr in the colonel's own notes.

Rachel breathed a sigh of relief when, three days before Christmas, Burr with his two boats left Clover Bottom.

"I hope," she remarked with a sigh, "we've seen the last of him. He meant well, but there's something queer about his schemes. He could have got boats and everything else he needed on the Ohio without coming here."

"He talked fair enough," said Jackson glumly.

He was sick of Burr. His own habit of taking the most direct course to a given point made it difficult for him to understand subterfuges and intrigue. He reviewed all his talks with Burr in a vain attempt to find something on which to pin a doubt of the man's honesty.

Rachel's point, that Burr could have obtained boats and supplies more conveniently elsewhere, troubled him. Why had Burr been so interested in Middle Tennessee? Could the colonel have patronized Clover Bottom to ingratiate himself with a major-general of militia who built boats and sold merchandise? Jackson was in a mood to wring Burr's neck. To be tricked, his credulity played upon!

He was still perturbed when on Christmas Day Mrs. Donelson spread the usual holiday feast for her family. Young Stokely Hays had gone south with Burr, and the rumors as to the nature of the colonel's expedition were naturally a matter of discussion. Colonel Hays stoutly defended Burr from the insinuations that were abroad.

"I can't believe he's up to mischief," said Hays, seeing that the women of the Donelson clan were uneasy over Stokely's enlistment with Burr. "He promised to treat Stokely as a son; I hate to think he'd take my boy away on a dishonest enterprise."

"We may rest easy, I think," said Jackson, who was himself far from easy. "I told Stokely to leave Burr instantly if he had any reason to doubt his purposes. And I gave him a letter to Governor Claiborne at New Orleans to deliver if he got into difficulties. We needn't worry about Stokely; the lad will take care of himself."

The venison and wild turkey required attention and Burr's projects were forgotten in the good cheer of the day. But two days later a messenger riding express from Washington flung into Nashville copies of a proclamation issued by President Jefferson warning the Southwest that sundry persons were conspiring to launch a military expedition against the dominions of Spain. It was a month old, but no less startling for that. The president mentioned no names, but the Cumberland folk did not need to be told that the shot was aimed at Burr. And they had taken him to their hearts and feasted him—a shifty lying traitor! The news, flying through the valley, brought to town a large crowd seething with indignation, furious that the colonel was beyond the reach of their wrath. Denied his person on which to take vengeance for his abuse of their hospitality they fashioned an effigy of the colonel and burned it to the accompaniment of derisive howls.

Jackson, thoroughly outraged, expressed his feelings with quill and ink. Burr must be intercepted, and he

sped a messenger to the Ohio to stop any west-bound boats that wore a warlike look. He wrote orders mobilizing the militia, and the two Nashville companies were at once ready for Inspector-General Robertson, affectionately apostrophized by Jackson as the father of the infant state; called upon the veterans of the Revolution and subsequent Indian wars,—sturdy old men ready to answer again their country's call. Drums beat and fifes piped in the streets of Nashville. Then came back Jackson's messenger from the commander at Fort Massac with the chilling news that all was quiet along the Ohio. Colonel Burr had drifted by with sixty men and ten barges, his fleet indistinguishable from others constantly passing on trading excursions to the Orleans country. The war spirit had gained such momentum in Middle Tennessee that it was subdued with difficulty. Jackson, chagrined, mystified, addressed his troops, praising their response to his call; wrote many letters afire with patriotism; cursed the powers at Washington for sending out a false alarm. Then reports from the East confirmed his impression that if Burr was tainted with treason, Wilkinson, General of the Armies of the United States, was more thoroughly soaked with the poison than Burr.

"So Wilkinson has squealed!" he shouted in the Nashville tavern as he perused a Philadelphia newspaper. "What does Thomas Jefferson mean by letting himself be taken in by that stale lard bucket! I'll wager my best horse Wilkinson will push Burr into the mire to save himself!"

A good audience urged him on—men who having

been called to the colors were bitter over their dismissal. They were reluctant to go home while there was any hope of their services being required.

Jackson kept scouts and messengers flying; he would not be found asleep if treason were polluting his land of beautiful rivers.

All was serene again when a letter from Dearborn, the secretary of war, reached Jackson, belatedly, with inquiries and suggestions that brought a roar from the general of militia. Nashville got the benefit of his indignation.

"The old granny! Tennessee doesn't wait for orders from a numskull secretary of war when danger threatens the country! You'd think from the tone of his letter he suspects me of complicity in some damnable conspiracy. If the blundering imbecile was where I could reach him I'd certainly call him out!"

And soon the peace of the Cumberland was disturbed by rumors and open accusations wafted over the mountains that Jackson had indeed been implicated in Burr's plot. The lord of the Hermitage raged.

Rachel, helpless to quiet him, was glad when Fowler arrived.

"You'd better forget the whole thing," Fowler recommended. "Your record of the business transactions, your letter to Claiborne, the orders assembling the troops, your warning to the commandant at Massac are the answer to any slanderous tongues."

"I wish to God I hadn't let Stokely Hays go with Burr," said Jackson bitterly. "But that was a fine lot of young fellows Burr had got together. I thought it

a good chance for the boy. It was the character of the men Burr was taking that strengthened my confidence in him—all ambitious young fellows. Burr said he wanted only intelligent, manly young Americans for his colony on the Washita. And if he lied to me I'll curse myself till I die for letting Stokely go."

But Stokely was enjoying a considerable experience of life on the lower Mississippi while his uncle fumed and his family worried. If Jackson only groped as to the real meaning of all the agitation in Washington, Burr himself had no illusions as to what was happening to him. Wilkinson, a gentleman who for three years had not scrupled to drop the Spanish king's gold into the pockets of his American uniform, had arranged a warm reception for the former vice-president down the great river. A man of philosophic temper, the colonel's mental processes were sorely taxed by the effort to adjust himself to the rapidly shifting changes in his status. He had been proclaimed a rebel in Mississippi Territory and the militia lay in wait for him; on the other hand he was cordially received and entertained by distinguished citizens. Honors one hour and insult the next; a strange plight for a gentleman who might, but for a perverse fate, have been even then established in the presidency!

His boats were searched and their cargoes found to be innocent of military stores. But once again he was the object of grand jury scrutiny. A grand jury pondered his case and not only refused to indict but tartly reproved the military authorities for arresting him. Wilkinson, concerned for the security of his own neck,

had sent soldiers in civilian dress to seize Burr and whisk him away to New Orleans for court-martial. Though the grand jury had refused to return a bill against Burr he was still under bond and required to report daily to the court. He was a fugitive from justice, the Mississippi governor informed him. With Wilkinson frantically trying to plant him before a firing squad and the civil authorities determined to hang on to him as a dangerous person, the former vice-president, feeling that many malevolent hands were clutching at him, resolved to seek a more salubrious atmosphere. He bade his young companions of the barges farewell, and, disguised in homespun and a flapping white hat, he set off with one companion toward the East. Four days of liberty, riding over rough "traces," and through swollen streams and he was again in custody—this time of an officer of the United States Army. He protested, demanded to know by what legal process he was detained. Jefferson's proclamation was exhibited; the secret instructions of the obese general, sweating with anxiety in New Orleans, were not produced. Burr submitted, behaving like a gentleman, and hurried eastward by a file of soldiers, he pondered his plight as he rode along.

Yes, he had been indiscreet; there was that cipher letter he had written Wilkinson, and he had lied in certain high quarters in a fashion that might be embarrassing. He had negotiated with the British minister for funds with which to effect a detachment of the western states from the Union. He had failed to get the half million dollars he asked, but the minister was a fool

and might betray him. To amuse that silly Melderode woman he had let his fancy play around Mexico and the Halls of the Montezumas. Wilkinson, playing for Jefferson's favor, had already shown his hand. He had more confidence in the woman! Still it was possible that Wilkinson had got hold of her; the vain, luxury-loving creature was always hard up and might betray him for a price.

By the time Stokely Hays reached home to report the collapse of the expedition, Jackson had heard of Burr's arrest.

"We ought to be grateful he wasn't arrested here," said Rachel, the much-enduring lover of peace.

"Why should he be arrested anywhere!" cried Jackson irritably. "It's all Jefferson's enmity, fed and encouraged by that black rogue Wilkinson! It's not a thing to laugh at, this being haled into one court after another for treason. What's the use of our Constitution if a man can be dragged over the country by his enemies in the hope of finding a court that'll hang him!"

Rachel didn't know, but she wished that so many things wouldn't happen, as if inspired by the Evil One, for the sole purpose of keeping her husband in a state of ferment. He had been freeing himself of the debts that had piled upon him in consequence of the Allison failure, a tedious business, but he was beginning to see blue sky again. The adoring Rachel had now come to a point where she welcomed a horse-race or a cock-fight as a happy interlude in her lord's tempestuous life. There was a cock-fighting pit adjacent to one of

the Nashville taverns where he sometimes backed his prized Hermitage roosters.

He came home jubilant from one of these contests, which were the joy of the Saturday afternoon loafers in Nashville.

Rachel, always on the watch for his return from any adventure, was waiting for him when he rode back with the victorious cock under his arm. He flung the bird to a waiting negro and went into the house to begin telling her of the battle.

"Congo didn't lose a feather! Bill Olmsted had been bragging his Snapper's the gamest rooster in all Tennessee, but I've got twenty dollars of his money! A fellow I knew in North Carolina had the right idea about feeding a bird for a fight."

He lighted his pipe and fumbled in his coat for a much crumpled paper.

"Feed 'em," he read, "three times a day pickled beef cut fine; give 'em milk to drink, smoke-dried Indian corn and bread soaked in milk. If you feed a cock eight days on that diet you're never going to lose. I reckon I'll keep this document. You can plan a cock-fight better'n a horse-race. A rooster's got more battle in him than the average horse. I'm going to take Congo to Jonesboro the next sitting of the court. There's some fellows over there who think they know it all and I'll show 'em what a real fightin' cock looks like!"

Happy and contented their days would have been but for the constant intrusion of bothersome outside affairs. And now came a subpena to attend the Burr trial at Richmond as a witness for the government.

"Damnable outrage!" cried Jackson as he scanned the summons. "I see myself helping Jefferson and Wilkinson ruin Burr. This is political persecution and they'll get no help from me!"

As spring was at hand and there was much to do on the plantation it was in no good temper that he set out for Richmond.

"Do keep out of trouble, my dear," admonished Rachel, but not with tears. She was confident that God would take care of him, but she was relieved that Fowler, who found it necessary just then to visit his banker in New York, was to accompany her belligerent lord.

CHAPTER XXVI

STIRRING DAYS AT RICHMOND

A DAY of the Richmond atmosphere sufficed for Fowler and he moved on, urging Jackson with brotherly solicitude to be wary of the tavern bars and to be careful of his speech. The Virginia capital's normal population of five thousand was enormously swollen by the throngs that poured in to see the great show. Jackson, sniffing the air surcharged with hostility to Burr, felt his old regard for the little colonel warm in his breast. His strong sense of justice and his chivalry were enlisted for the man he had called friend, now so sorely beset. The crowd that overflowed the taverns and lodged in tents on the capitol grounds was apparently of one mind as to Burr's guilt. The unanimity of sentiment only strengthened Jackson's feeling that a sadly misjudged man was being unnecessarily humiliated and probably would be branded as a traitor before his relentless enemies were satisfied.

As the legal machinery began to grind the lord of the Hermitage employed his leisure in denouncing the prosecution as the culmination of a conspiracy blacker than any crime of which Burr stood charged. The crowd laughed and jeered as the tall backwoodsman rose on the capitol steps the better to command attention.

"Mark Antony's come to bury Cæsar!" some one shouted.

"No; you young jackanapes!" cried Jackson, wheeling to point his finger at the speaker. "I've come to beg you not to stab an honest American citizen in the back! What's come upon Virginia that she's bent upon destroying the character of an honest citizen who has served our country well? Why doesn't Thomas Jefferson come here and face the man he's put in pillory? Jefferson," his voice rose shrilly as he heard mutterings of disapproval at the mention of the president, "Jefferson is using the power of the presidency to crush his enemies. That lying blackguard of a Wilkinson, commander of the American armies, is the president's willing tool in the damnable attempt to put the rope around Aaron Burr's neck! We'll see whether your other Virginian, John Marshall, cringes before the royal mandate! You—you over there!"—he glared at a man on the edge of the crowd who had shouted something he did not catch. "If you've got something to say to me spit it out! I'm ready to give satisfaction to any man among you who doesn't like what I'm saying. Jefferson is rendering his country a poor service in loosening his dogs on an honest man. This nation would be in safer hands now if Burr was president!"

He walked slowly down the steps, his head high, his eyes afire.

Wherever he found hearers—and this was not difficult—he denounced the attempt of the government to ruin Burr. A strange fellow; it was said that he had dared the district attorney to call him before the grand

jury. The crowds, keen for the blood of the infamous traitor, were awed by Jackson's stern countenance as he stalked through the streets. The daily session of the court, where Chief Justice Marshall sat as circuit judge gravely attentive to debates on legal points, bored the Tennessean. He kept to the open, or championed Burr's cause in the taverns. He praised Burr's patriotism and cursed Wilkinson.

Wilkinson, cast as the hero of the great drama, had kept the stage waiting but he now arrived, his ponderous figure magnified by his glittering uniform. Jackson eyed with scorn the Spanish king's hireling as he passed through the streets to the court-room.

As he fretted through the days, with the Virginia sun waxing hot, Jackson struck up an acquaintance with a young man named Swarthout, who had served Burr as secretary and messenger. Swarthout hated Wilkinson with reason, for the noble general, frantically grabbing any one who might reveal his own scoundrelism, had ordered Swarthout seized in New Orleans and shipped to Washington for incarceration in the marine barracks.

"Wilkinson's a beast!" declared Swarthout. "The old fiend even took my clothes away and stole my watch!"

"The rotten pumpkin!" cried Jackson. "I'd like to cut off his big ears and turn him loose among the Cherokees."

"John Marshall's an honest man," said Swarthout. "He'll not let the courts be used by the president to punish an enemy. There's a man in Louisiana I'll never

forget—Edward Livingston. He had the courage to fight Wilkinson's high-handed operations in New Orleans. Ever hear of Livingston? He was once mayor of New York, but now he's the finest lawyer in New Orleans—a great man I'd call him."

"And you'd be mighty right!" Jackson assented heartily. "I knew him when I was in Congress; a remarkable man indeed."

Jackson sought Commodore Truxton, the naval hero, who was not displeased that Jackson had named a horse for him. Truxton was a witness for Burr, a fact that added to Jackson's admiration for the doughty sea-dog. They drank whisky to the confusion of the administration, which had lately retired Truxton from the navy without warrant or excuse.

In the heat and turmoil, depressed and irritable, Jackson waited for the grand jury to report its findings. Letters from the Hermitage were like the touch of a cool comforting hand on his hot brow. Worse than Philadelphia in those months he had spent there—now crowded far back in his memory—was this Virginia town in which issues weightier than the crowd knew hung upon the judgment of the serene Marshall.

The corn, Rachel wrote, had never flourished as that spring. Nothing mattered greatly in his life but his love for Rachel! All that he saw at Richmond strengthened his determination to go home and be done with public affairs.

Standing one morning in front of the Eagle Tavern he saw Wilkinson approaching in full uniform. Young Swarthout, advancing from the opposite direction, also

saw the puissant Wilkinson, rolling toward the court-room like a water-logged galleon. Behind the general of the armies strode an aide looking a little sheepish at being obliged to attend his pompous purple-faced superior. The sidewalk was narrow and it was impossible for the general to fail to see the young man he had shipped to Washington in chains. He quickened his step to escape as quickly as possible from so ignoble a presence. Swarthout, enraged by the sight of the great man, pushed him into the gutter. The crowd gasped at the indignity; but there were titters at the general's discomfiture. The aide scowled at Swarthout but at a word from his chief hurried on. Jackson, close at hand, a grin on his face, hastened to grasp Swarthout's hand.

"If you'd kicked the old cow it would have been better. I was ready to act if he'd ordered his aide to seize you! It's damned humiliating to think the people are taxed to feed that bulging carcass!"

As he moved on a woman touched his arm. It was Lady Melderode, but so changed that he gave a gasp of astonishment as he blurted her name.

"I can hardly expect you to remember me, General Jackson, but it has not been so long since our last meeting. The mirror gives me sad reports of my appearance. I have been ill. It is no wonder you didn't know me."

Lady Melderode was indeed changed; her cheeks were sunken, the light had gone out of her fine eyes and the old languid insolence of her bell-like voice now sug-

gested a great weariness. She was racked by a cough; put her hand to her lips to muffle it.

"That Swarthout lad has his courage!" she said as they moved slowly along with the crowd. "I saw all that hideous business at New Orleans. That monstrous pachyderm Wilkinson usurped the law down there, created himself dictator, and now he's got poor dear Burr where he hopes to land him on the gallows."

"You are here to assist Colonel Burr?" Jackson asked, thinking that perhaps she had been called as a witness.

"Alas, no! We parted for ever at New Orleans. I had become an encumbrance! A woman does, you know! I might tell them some things—that grand jury up yonder with crazy John Randolph of Roanoke as its foreman! How ridiculously you manage things in America! For your private ear, O man of iron! I will tell you the dear colonel really never knew just what he meant to do in the South. He had his glorious dreams of empire but only the haziest of dreams. His idea was to start his colony and be prepared to show his patriotism in case of war with Spain; and then to press on into Mexico. And then perhaps, a scepter and crown. It amused him to talk of it, but his plans were the most nebulous. I'm sorry for him, though he treated me shabbily. Truly a man of genius and an adorable lover! It's a high tribute to his intellect that your president, who can't bear rivalry, is bent on destroying him. Colonel Burr is the abler man. He would never have committed the indiscretion of declaring all men to be equal!" She laughed harshly. "Never was greater

fallacy! I'm sure you agree with me, O great chief of the Cumberland!"

"Burr played with fire—he showed bad judgment in mixing up with Wilkinson," said Jackson. "But this attempt to punish him as a traitor is infamous."

"It will fail," remarked Lady Melderode. "I have taken a look at your chief chancellor. This awkward, gangling Marshall has brains in his head. And he's not to be frightened. I have seen Washington and all your mighty ones, but this Virginia gentleman who wears such shocking clothes and spills snuff on his waistcoat is the greatest of them all."

She faltered, swayed uncertainly, clutched his arm.

"Do pardon me! I'm always bothering you; but it's a relief to find some one I can talk to. I'm only a candle blown by the wind! I'm very tired; I'll have to rest before I can go back to my inn."

He turned into a store, explained that the lady was ill from the heat, and the proprietor gave them chairs by a window at the rear, brought water and cups and left them.

"You don't think I'm shamming?" she asked with a wan smile. "I promise not to die on your hands. This hateful cough has worn me out, that's all. I'm much too young to die; and the world amuses me." Then with an abrupt change of manner: "Give me news of my husband. He's well, I hope."

"Yes," said Jackson at once on guard.

"Still farming out yonder on your beautiful river?"

"Successfully—yes. He's become one of us; our people hold him in the highest regard."

"They would; he's a gentleman of a rare sort. I would give much to see him," she added wistfully.

"He traveled east with me and went on to New York."

"Ah! So I've been near him again! If I might see him—I should like just—one word——"

"—and that word—would be?" demanded Jackson, frowning.

"Mercy—forgiveness——"

"Such words would not serve you, madam."

"But you have denied me the chance to make reparation! He would be more magnamimous than you. You don't credit me with the possession of a soul!"

"That's not for me to say," Jackson replied doggedly. "I'm only concerned to protect my friend from any interruption of his peace. I haven't changed my mind since I saw you at Nashville. He has honored me with his confidence. If he had any desire to see you he would have made some sign. I tell you frankly that if I thought you were seeking him I'd give him warning."

"You are relentless! I suppose it's my own fault he lost an earldom and a magnificent property. He's been declared dead in law. I suppose I might cause some trouble to the cousin who has taken over the property by letting it be known that the heir still lives."

"You've done enough mischief!" he retorted.

"You think," she flared, "that I'm capable of blackmail! That's going a little far. I really would like you to think some good of me!"

"My opinion is not important," he replied indifferently.

She glanced toward the door where the shopkeeper was engaged in a lively discussion of the trial with some friends who had been unable to gain entrance to the court-room.

"Your opinions, my friend, will carry more weight in the future than in the past."

He scowled, thinking she was resorting to flattery to conceal some mischievous purpose. She went on with more animation, and there was a hint of the old light in her eyes.

"Your great chance is coming! You think me a fool, but not for nothing have I listened and watched the world these past few years. And it may be—it may be I have some little clairvoyant gift! There's a war ahead. I have my own way of knowing what is talked of in high quarters. And when war comes your great day will have arrived."

"War with Spain; that's inevitable," he said carelessly.

"Don't be absurd! It's Britain that's preparing to strike. Among your corn fields you little know of the complexity of the intrigue that is enmeshing this dear republic. Britain grows more insolent. Only this morning came news of the firing on the *Chesapeake*—an American ship, in Virginia waters, by a British man-of-war. Are American ships to be stopped and searched with impunity? There's a pretty question your president must answer."

"Jefferson will do nothing! He's too busy hanging Burr to worry about the national defense," Jackson retorted.

"Not to-day or to-morrow," she went on musingly, "but in a few years war will come and you will hold the center of the world's stage. Listen to my counsel. I have read your stars, my Lord! Let politics alone but cultivate the war god. It delights me to see that angry glare in your eyes! I annoy and perplex you; you do not like me in my rôle of prophetess. But tell your adored Rachel what I have said. And now I'll hold you prisoner no longer. I advise you to go home. The grand jury will report indictments for treason against Burr and Blennerhasset to-morrow."

"How do you know?" he demanded.

"It's my business to know things," she remarked. "My information is always a little ahead of the newspapers. I advise you, my gallant Mars, to return to your plantation with all speed; there's only vexation for you here. The Richmond air is bad for your temper. You are dismissed. I will leave you at the door. But short of violent death we shall meet again. I must live to see you crowned! Oh, don't worry about it, my dear General! The high gods have ordained it. I peer into the future and see the victor's wreath and hear the loud acclaim of the people!"

"You've lost your mind, Lady Melderode!"

"What I see, I see," she replied sententiously. "Just as sure as I forecast the indictments to-morrow you will somewhere in the Southland ride through cheering streets carpeted with flowers. How soon I do not know; there may be some years of waiting. Tend the cotton and corn; perfect yourself in a soldier's business. And then—who knows—ah! who knows!" The spirit sud-

denly went out of her. "You may dismiss me from your mind," she said listlessly. "I'm leaving for Charleston to-morrow on my way to New Orleans—a city I love! So gay, and food and wine so cheap! Thank you for listening to me. It helps now and then to meet a man who is also a gentleman. Pray present my compliments to that enviable woman, your wife!"

As Lady Melderode had so confidently predicted, the very next day indictments were returned against Aaron Burr and Herman Blennerhasset for treason and high crimes and misdemeanors.

Jackson wondered. There was no accounting for the woman! It was quite possible that by means of secret communications with the chancelleries of the world she really knew what she was talking about when she spoke of war with England.

The trial of Burr was deferred, and, boldly announcing in various taverns that he would have nothing more to do with the prosecution, Jackson cursed the whole proceeding and turned his face toward the Hermitage.

CHAPTER XXVII

A CALL TO ARMS

HE PICKED up several likely additions to his stable from planters in the neighborhood of Richmond and the joy of his new possessions buoyed him as he journeyed toward the peace and comfort of the Cumberland. As he rode through the great forests he repeatedly called upon God to witness that never again would he bother with politics. Political embroilments were a waste of energy. To date no man who had gained high place in the councils of the young republic had escaped the stab of calumny. All that he had seen in Richmond had filled him with disgust only expressible in savage vituperation. The militia under his command should have his best attention; but otherwise he would woo the soil and devote himself to the breeding of superior horses and cattle. And there was always his ambition to give Rachel a house that should be a fitting habitation for that queen of women. He had seen on this trip some mansions that pleased his fancy and when he had the money he would show the Cumberland what he thought of Rachel!

Rachel, pleased but puzzled by this new humor, joyously adapted herself to it. Even the report from Richmond of Burr's acquittal failed to rouse him. She was relieved when occasionally his serenity was dis-

turbed for an hour and he threatened to cut off some rascal's ears!

A piano he had commissioned Fowler to buy in Philadelphia completed its perilous voyage down the Ohio and up the Cumberland and landed safely at Clover Bottom. With it were instruction books and a collection of music. Fowler, confessing that in his youth he had played the organ, offered his services as tutor, and Rachel was soon able to play hymns and her well-loved ballads. Jackson bought a flute, remembering that he had acquired the trick of that instrument in his law-student days at Salisbury, and he piped blithely to Rachel's playing. Music served to renew the youth of the lord and lady of the Hermitage, and more than ever young people sought them out; there was no pleasanter place to go than the Jacksons'. A dance now and then and Sunday afternoons given up to singing; these were happy days on the plantation.

"We've always had love," said Rachel one evening, "but now at last we have peace. I think your Lady Melderode was wrong about that war she said would bring you fame. I was worried about that for a while. But things have never run so smoothly as since you came home from Richmond. I hope that woman was mistaken about everything. If you should be famous and they'd make you president—well, dear," she went on with a quaver in her voice, "I want you to have your heart's desire in everything, but that would mean the end of these happy days at home."

"Bah!" Jackson ejaculated with a scornful snap of his fingers. "Lady Melderode's an idiot! Fortune

tellers only guess at things just like the rest of us. I'm spoiled now for war even if war should come. I'm too happy at home. Let's play the tune of that Scotch song about Prince Charlie before we go to bed!"

"We have everything we could ask to make us happy but one," said Rachel one day. "I've prayed that children might come to us. But it seems sure now that I'll never have a child. I wanted to give you sons and it would be sweet to have a daughter in the house. Sometimes I'm very unhappy; a childless woman lives only half a life."

"Children would have eased the way for us in old age," said Jackson solemnly. "But," he added thoughtfully, "I've been thinking——"

"Of taking one of the twin babies of brother Savern's!" she cried, her eyes dancing. "Oh, my arms are so hungry to hold that dear little boy!"

"And pretty soon I could dance him on my knee!" exclaimed Jackson, as pleased as she at the thought of having a child in the house. "He's the brightest little chap I ever saw. I've been wondering whether we couldn't steal or borrow him."

"Two babies are too much for a mother to care for. Let's ask her to let us take the boy she's already named for you! I think Savern would be willing."

And so one day Jackson rode proudly home carrying young Andrew Donelson in his arms to become a new factor in the happiness of the Hermitage.

Jackson, less restless now, demurred at every necessity that called him from home. Here at last was the realization of the life he and Rachel had hoped to live.

The boy should have every advantage he himself had missed.

Through three happy years the domestication of the lord of the Cumberland proceeded smoothly. He sniffed at all rumors of war; Madison, now president, he characterized as a spiritless being, a feebler Jefferson who couldn't be kicked into war.

He put his militia through prodigious drills. The rest of the nation might be blind to the importance of preparedness for war but not Tennessee! Rachel noted with satisfaction that he was spending fewer Sunday afternoons at the taverns and was more inclined to listen to her readings from the Bible and from Shakespeare. She had ceased worrying about the danger of war when the trumpets sounded.

A gay company was assembled on the Hermitage veranda that warm June evening when John Coffee arrived at breakneck speed, shouting across the lawn the news that war was declared against England.

The young men, gathered with their sweethearts to enjoy the Jackson hospitality, lifted a cheer. Fowler, following hard upon Coffee, put himself at Jackson's disposal for secretarial work and the dispatch of messages.

His face gleaming with sweat in the candle-light, Jackson drove his quill; a letter to the governor, another to the president, orders to his colonels. The young people, awed by the abrupt intrusion of the war-god upon the peace of the Jackson home, crowded into the room as Fowler and Coffee left in haste for Nashville.

"There's work for Tennessee to do and work aplenty!" said Jackson, smiling upon the eager, questioning young faces.

"You don't think England can whip us, do you, General Jackson?" asked one of the girls.

"Whip us!" Jackson caught her up. "Why, my dear child, we'll give those fellows a lickin' they won't forget in a thousand years! Things do even up in this world. I'll tell you young folks something. I was a puny lad when the Revolution was raging in the Carolinas. The British soldiers were making fiendish war on women and children. A clip with the saber on the head and a slash on the arm"—he touched the old scars lightly—"have helped me to remember the way they attacked helpless women and burned their cabins. My brother and I were flung into a filthy stockade at Camden and starved and denied medical care. As a result my brother died. Thank God! I've got the chance to square accounts! And for every sailor they've dragged from an American ship we'll chuck a thousand Englishmen into the sea! Our Tennesseans are the straightest rifle shots in the world! All we want is plenty of British heads for targets. Run along home now and tell your folks the news."

"So it's come," said Rachel, as she blew out the candles on the writing-table. "You'll have your chance. You'll not fail in anything they give you to do. You know without my telling you, my heart goes with you, my dearest, wherever you go."

He was at her side, his arms about her, bending that their cheeks might touch. Brave to this moment, the

courage died in her now as they stood in the light of the last flickering candle. She freed his arms and her hands clasped his cheeks.

"I'll not cry," she said, stifling a sob. "I wouldn't hold you back. I'm so proud of you! You're all my life! Without you I should die!"

"We're not thinking of dying!" he said with a laugh. "This war won't last long. We'll clean 'em up on land and sea! I'm not looking for glory. There'll be thousands of men called to serve, and you can be sure the powers at Washington won't let me be too conspicuous! My stand on the Burr case fixed that!"

His attempt to minimize the importance of the summons to war, in which she saw first of all an assault upon the peace of their home life, failed to console her. She picked up the candle and started up-stairs.

"What that woman told you is true," she said when they were in their room. "It may not all be as she said but I've had the same feeling from the time I began to love you. It's the will of God that you shall do great things!" She lifted her head and the pride shone in her eyes. "When you leave me now it will be the beginning of changes. Our life here will never be the same again. They'll take you away from me! Oh, that's the hardest part of it! You'll never belong to me in the same way. I'll have to give you up."

Nothing he found to say comforted her.

"I love you so! I love you so!" she murmured over and over again.

She had never been like this before—this daughter of the Donelsons with her heritage and experience of

valor. In spite of himself her apprehensions sobered him, wrought in him an unfamiliar self-consciousness. His awkward attempts to soothe her were ineffectual. It was not until the dawnlight crept into the windows that she fell asleep like a tired unhappy child.

At breakfast she was herself again, questioning him as to his personal needs for the impending campaign, inviting his speculations as to the use likely to be made of his command. She walked with him to the horse-block when he was ready to ride to Nashville.

"I must have been tired last night or I wouldn't have behaved like a baby," she said, clinging to his hand after he had mounted. "You'll forgive me, won't you, dear?"

"Do you think I'd like it if you didn't take on a little!" he demanded with a gruffness assumed to hide his tenderness. "There's some stuff to be hauled up from Clover Bottom. Tell the boys to fetch it. And tell Jonas to fix the corn-crib door where a plank's come loose. And while he's about it show him where you want those new shelves put in the spring-house. If Jim Turner comes for that bay mare he looked at last week the price is seventy-five dollars cash or I'll take it out in corn."

She smiled, knowing well that it was only a pretense that the plantation and not war was first in his thoughts.

"Fools! Impotent imbeciles! In God's name who's running this war! They sent us here and now nobody knows why we came!"

Jackson at the head of two thousand volunteers camped near Natchez thus delivered himself daily to Coffee, now a colonel of cavalry, and to the faithful Fowler, who had refused a commission and in a private's uniform unostentatiously acted as secretary to Jackson. Fowler, wanting no glory, but only to serve the man he loved, had created this place for himself. He had promised Rachel to keep watch over her warrior lord, and Jackson, not suspecting, had welcomed the idea of having his friend close to his person.

The commander's aides, John Reid and Thomas Hart Benton, men of marked ability, welcomed Fowler to the confidential circle at headquarters, knowing Jackson's affection for him; and the impetuous commander listened to Fowler even when he flouted the advice of the others.

"Wait for orders! You'll gain nothing by offending your superiors," Fowler counseled when Jackson, infuriated by prolonged inaction, threatened to start with his command for the Canadian frontier where Hull's American army had met crushing defeat. By the Eternal God! he would go somewhere if only down to New Orleans to tell Wilkinson, that waddling lump of pork, what he thought of him. His dueling pistols were in his kit, and as he gloomily ate his dinner he expressed a strong desire to pull the nose of the obnoxious general. Then came an order from Washington whose effect was to loosen a terrific stream of wrath.

"Damn their cowardly souls!" he roared and flung the paper to Benton to read aloud.

He was to dismiss his command; let the men get

themselves home as best they might! The stupidest and curtest of orders, in which the thanks of the president were only added insult. Five hundred miles from Nashville and no hint of pay for the volunteers, no provision for transportation! All military stores to be turned over to Wilkinson, whose soul it was necessary again to consign to eternal hell-fire.

"By the Eternal!" Jackson declared when his officers had been hastily assembled, "our men are going back as soldiers of Tennessee and not as a band of starving vagabonds. I'll never face the folks at home if I don't take my command home as I brought it. I'll do it, by God, if I pay the bills myself!"

A hint that Wilkinson had inspired the order of dismissal in the hope of enlisting the Tennesseans in his own command stiffened Jackson's resolve that not a man should be left behind.

Back to Tennessee they went. Jackson tramped most of the way, giving his three horses for the use of the sick. His chagrin at the futility of the expedition yielded to his sense of responsibility for the safe return of his command. The more seriously sick, borne in wagons, knew constantly his ministering hand. They marveled at his hardihood as he swung along through the mud, shaming the despondent with his own cheer. His face might be drawn with weariness but there was no sign of fatigue in the keen blue eyes that softened so responsively to every appeal to his sympathies. They began to speak of him affectionately as the "old man," or "old Jackson." Marveling at his endurance they must needs find a homely descriptive word with which to

characterize his strong fiber. He was like hickory; soon he was "Old Hickory." Hearing the sobriquet bestowed upon him the commander smiled.

"The boys mean it kindly," he remarked to Fowler, "but that word old hurts a little. I'm forty-six and pretty much of a damned failure."

"Never say that, for it's false!" cried Fowler. "Look at me for the perfect pattern of the failure. Taking these men home after the trick the government played on you will make you more friends than anything you ever did. You're going to be the most popular man in Tennessee. Any lingering animosity on account of the Dickinson affair will be wiped out. They'll need you before this war is over, and when they do you'll find no difficulty in getting men to follow you!"

"Damn it, Fowler! I don't want to be a fizzle. But if this war's coming to nothing I'll settle down to raising colts and corn!"

The mud-splashed legion was received with great acclaim in Nashville, and Jackson's spirits soared again. The vanguard had spread the news of the commander's considerate care before he arrived.

Rachel took him to her heart with new pride. The latest news from the East discouraged the idea that the war might be of short duration; the volunteers would be needed again. Her misgivings were gone now that he was safely home. She, too, was aware that the old enmities that had given her so many sleepless nights were forgotten. The women of East Tennessee, forgetting the feud with Sevier, presented a stand of colors to the command with a noteworthy ceremony in the

Nashville public square, before the eyes of all the Cumberland. Such cheers had never before been heard in Nashville as greeted the commander's speech of acceptance. A happy hour for Rachel. They were beginning to understand and to appreciate this man, her lover.

"You will be patient now, my dear." she said when she had got him home to the Hermitage and he had been properly impressed by the fine progress young Andrew had made in his absence. "And you have earned a little rest and peace."

CHAPTER XXVIII

MORE TROUBLE FOR RACHEL

PEACE for a little while; but he must project himself into another affair of honor! A foolish business. Why couldn't he rest on his well-won laurels and keep out of brawls? He was only to serve young Captain Carroll, who had accompanied the Natchez expedition, as second in a duel, he explained to Rachel; but who was Carroll, until recently clerk in a Pittsburgh hardware store, that he should disturb the tranquillity of the Hermitage by requiring such service of its master? Rachel scolded a little; she had had her fill of duels. Jackson's partiality for the handsome captain had caused jealousy among other young officers and Jesse Benton, brother of Tom Benton, had seized upon some trivial matter to challenge Carroll.

"For God's sake don't mix in their troubles! It's beneath your dignity. And the Bentons have been your good friends! Tom Benton's in Washington now trying to collect your claims against the government for the money you advanced to bring the volunteers home."

This from Coffee, who knew too well Jackson's weakness for getting into scrapes.

"They're trying to drive Carroll out of the state! They say he's fawned on me to win preferment, and by the Eternal! I'll stand by him!"

The result of the meeting justified Coffee's fears.

Benton received a wound that kept him in bed two weeks,—no serious matter; but his brother, pressing for the allowance of Jackson's claims, was mightily stirred when the news reached him. He proceeded in hot haste to Nashville, denouncing Jackson all the way from the Potomac to the Cumberland. His cursings preceded him like a pillar of fire, and Coffee, reading the signs in the September heavens, prepared Jackson for trouble. Carroll left town, perhaps on business pertaining to the hardware trade. Jackson established headquarters at the Nashville Inn, and indulged his fancy for billiards with his nephew, Stokely Hays, while Coffee reconnoitered.

The Bentons were at the City Hotel across the square, Coffee reported.

"I'll go for my mail," said Jackson. "If those scoundrels want to see me they'll know I'm here."

He put down his cue, donned his coat, buckled on his short sword; looked to his pistols.

Tom Benton was sunning himself at the door of his inn as Jackson and Coffee crossed the square diagonally to the post-office.

Jackson and Coffee passed the time of day with the postmaster, got their mail, and started back to the inn, this time keeping to the sidewalk, a course which made it necessary to pass Benton, who, reinforced by his brother, was still standing at the tavern door.

"Don't speak; let him make any advances," said Coffee, close at Jackson's side.

But Jackson's blood took fire at the sight of the two men, so lately his friends but now his bitter enemies.

"Defend yourselves, you damned scoundrels!" he shouted.

"Ingrate! Cowardly liar!" roared Benton with a menacing gesture, but Jackson's pistol was out. Benton slowly retreated through the public room of the tavern with the muzzle of Jackson's pistol at his heart. No words were spoken but their gaze met in a glare of hatred. Benton was thirty-one, of powerful frame and utterly fearless even with death only six inches away. The loafers in the tavern watched the men with awe. Coffee had remained outside to watch the younger Benton, but Jesse, having seen his brother's plight, dashed around the building to the balcony at the rear.

A cry from Coffee was too late to warn Jackson of his peril. Jesse's pistol roared and Jackson went down with his left shoulder and arm torn by slugs and bullets. Coffee, rushing upon Tom Benton, fired and missed, but Benton tumbled backward down the stairs into the court below and was out of the fight. Stokely Hays now reached the scene, saw Jackson lying on the floor and attacked Jesse fiercely with a dirk.

The town was aroused and a crowd swept in from the street. Hays and Coffee, thirsting for vengeance, were seized before they could inflict injury upon the furious Bentons.

Jackson, lying in a pool of blood from his jagged wound, was borne across the square to his own inn. The arm must be amputated, said the doctors. Jackson, weak from the loss of blood, rallied as they announced the verdict. By God, he would keep his arm, he gasped, his eyes blazing. They left the lead where it was em-

bedded in his arm and dressed the lacerated shoulder, while in the square the Bentons denounced and defied their enemy.

More bad news for Rachel, who rode to town in haste to take charge of the wounded lion. He couldn't be moved for a week and after she got him home he lay for a fortnight suffering intensely but growling that a ton of Benton lead couldn't kill him.

"You chose a mighty poor time for getting yourself shot," said Tom Overton, eying the sick man scornfully. "An express rider's just passed through with black news from the South. Five hundred and fifty people—men, women and children massacred at Fort Sims by the Indians! The Cherokees are running wild. There'll be a call for volunteers. And you lie here half shot to pieces!"

"By God! I'll not lie here long!" cried Jackson. "The accursed British are inciting the Indians; we must look to the safety of Tennessee!"

Rachel, adept in adjusting herself to the swift changes in her lord's affairs, rejoiced that the governor's call to arms hastened his recovery. The men of the phalanx that had followed him to Natchez were eager to march again. A committee, calling at the Hermitage to inquire whether the general would be able to take the field, found him still in bed but full of fight. Not all the powers of darkness could keep him at home. Much to be done, yes, to fit his command for the new adventure; but his quick-visioning mind neglected nothing. At his bedside much ink flowed from Fowler's quill.

"If those jackasses in Washington will keep hands off we'll bring peace to Israel," he declared to Fowler. Rachel's readings from the Scriptures were bearing fruit! He was so pleased with his phrase that he thrust it into a letter to Holmes, Governor of Mississippi. The southern sky was red, and he ordered Coffee to start toward the Gulf at once with three hundred cavalrymen. Word came back from Coffee that his command was inadequate; the war was on in earnest.

Jackson, reading the giant's message sprang out of bed.

"Bring my uniform and sword!" he shouted so all the house heard him.

"You're not well enough, my dear!" pleaded Rachel; but the fire of battle was in his eyes. Soon she was busy packing his camp kit; tearlessly discussing which of the Hermitage horses he should take.

"What was it Job said about the right horse for a soldier?" demanded Jackson, glad that she was not given to lamentations. And Rachel, polishing his sword belt, quoted:

"'He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.'"

"That man Job knew the points of a cavalry horse," Jackson remarked meditatively. "I'd like to have seen one of those old armies on the march with their shields and spears and the chariots rumbling along!"

She knew when he left her, worn and haggard, to ride into the camp of his beloved Tennesseans—his

arm in a sling, but with the old unconquerable fire in his eyes—that destiny had again flung the dice against their old sweet dream of peace.

Sleepless nights for Rachel, long vigils by the Hermitage windows; hourly prayers to God for her lover-husband's preservation.

At times the benign powers seemed to have deserted him. To smash the Indian confederacy would have proved a formidable task under the most favoring circumstances but the lord of the Hermitage, clear at all times as to method and means, was beset by every conceivable obstacle. Inadequate equipment, failure of supplies, mutiny, lack of a decisive policy at Washington—these were matters not calculated to tranquilize or inspire a leader whose sole aim was to perform expeditiously a difficult task.

"By the Eternal! I'll destroy this savage power or die in the attempt!" he declared to Fowler, as he concluded the dictation of a stirring address to his troops.

Action at last! Jackson the soldier began to show his hand. The Creeks, dismayed by the relentless blows of the most formidable foe that had ever invaded their territory, made a stand on the Tallapoosa, and there Jackson battered their fortifications with his six-pounders while sharpshooters from the treetops and Coffee's horsemen cut down the fugitives. The commander's heart was big with pride in his Tennesseans. His indomitable army was sprinkled with geniuses! A certain Davy Crockett emerged from obscurity in the course of the campaign—dead shot, whimsical humor-

ist, beguiling story-teller—the joy of the command. Sam Houston all but perished of wounds received on the Tallapoosa. There were scholars in the Tennessee army who could answer any question in the whole range of human knowledge, as well as artisans expert in all the crafts. The commander knew and loved them all. His sobriquet of Old Hickory grew in favor, though some there were who preferred Old Lion. "Old" was not applied wholly in affection, for forty-seven years had passed since he first saw the light in the cabin on the Waxhaw, and he looked older than his years.

Fowler, Reid, Lewis and Eaton, always attentive to his comfort, knew that he suffered much. The ribs broken by Dickinson's bullet ached in time of rain; and Benton's lead was not a comfortable burden in his arm. A veritable god of war, Jackson held to his purpose, though half the time barely able to sit his horse. Emaciated, sallow, weakened by chronic diarrhea, he crawled out of his camp bed at any hour of the night to look to the comfort of his men.

A rumor ran among the Indians after the first shattering defeats that a white devil, invulnerable to arrow and bullet, was loose in their old hunting-grounds. Sipping gin and water, the only medicine that eased his sufferings, he flung off letters to the governor at Knoxville—complaints and demands—in his own slashing style. Now and then, when a messenger could be provided, he send a note to Rachel assuring her that all was well and with affectionate messages to little Andrew.

"This business will kill you!" growled Coffee, the

far-ranging cavalryman, seeking the commander for a conference and appalled by his appearance.

"In God's name stop blubbering, John Coffee! You've been prophesying my death for twenty years! I haven't got time to die!"

A power more potent than gin kept him going: the will of the sick boy who would not die in the Camden stockade was not to be broken in Jackson, leader of men!

"The one damned sure way to get the old man up is to tell him that he's too sick to get out of bed," Major Reid remarked to Fowler.

"I'll rest when I've cleaned up this job," Jackson replied tartly to their importunities that he withdraw from the theater of war to recuperate. "In war nothing's done till all is done," he added, and these words passed into a saying among the men.

With the fierce energy of a hundred giants he pressed on to the conclusion of his task, with all its maddening difficulties and changing dangers, till the musical names in the Creek and Cherokee geography were rewritten in blood—Talluschatches, Talladega, Tohopeka, Coosa, Tallapoosa! The Holy Land of the southern tribes was devastated, their lying prophets slain. Half-breed leaders, employing the military tactics and methods of the whites, prolonged the struggle, but the backbone of the Spanish-British-Indian alliance broke under the bludgeon blows of the relentless Tennessean.

Eight months of it and he led the victors home again. There must be speechmaking and feasting for the con-

quering hero, whose answer was to praise his gallant command.

What next would be asked of him? The question was like a pain in Rachel's heart. She was shocked to see him so thin, and she alone saw the great weariness in the blue eyes. Far too many people invaded the Hermitage, and yet they came only to praise him. She managed now and then to keep him in bed for a day, but not without a struggle. There was no peace for the Hermitage; peace seemed the least attainable thing in all the world! The subjugation of the Creeks was only a small item; the Spaniards in Florida remained a menace; and the war with England dragged wearily on.

"You're a soldier now," she remarked as they sat on the Hermitage veranda. "You've done so many things, my dearest, and done them all well. You'll be ordered away again; I reckon it may come any day."

In spite of herself a note of melancholy crept into her voice but, absorbed, he had not noticed it.

"When I was a boy over yonder on the Waxhaw I used to think I'd like to be a soldier," he said. "And now I reckon I haven't done so badly."

This was the boy in him appealing for maternal sympathy; and touched to find that this yearning had survived all vicissitude, peril and success she gave him the warm praise he craved, happy in the knowledge that he found it sweeter than any that could be given him by governors or presidents.

Soldiering was unprofitable. Debts bothered him. A letter arrived from Washington asking if he would accept a brigadier-generalship in the regular army.

"If you take it that makes you a soldier for life," remarked Rachel, but she was pleased by the recognition.

"No; I could resign any time. But I don't know that I care to take the commission. I like serving with the Tennessee volunteers. It would be mighty different if they put me over men from the northern seaboard. I like to be with our neighbor boys, who can march and fight on parched corn."

He was still pondering his decision and discussing the matter with his friends when a letter arrived offering a major-generalship.

"That's more like it," said Reid. "But they're offering it because they need you. They're finding out what you've known all along—that the southern coast has got to be protected. If the British take New Orleans the war is lost. And with the usual allowances the commission is worth six thousand dollars."

"Damn the money! With the higher rank I can clean things up without waiting for silly orders from Washington. I'll send my acceptance this hour!"

In the South again, with the enlarged authority of his higher rank, Jackson began to enjoy himself. The fact that he was now an officer of the regular army, directly responsible to Washington, was somewhat irritating but this didn't trouble him greatly. The vulnerability of the southern coast had interested him for many years and the accursed Dons were still in Florida, where just now they were sheltering British ships.

With headquarters established at Mobile, he pondered maps.

CHAPTER XXIX

YANKEE DOODLE AND THE MARSEILLAISE

"ONLY a thousand miles of coast to defend!" he snarled; lighted his pipe and studied the maps anew.

A friendly Indian came into camp displaying a new English musket, and reported that the British were already arming the Creek refugees on Spanish soil. Here were pretty questions of diplomacy involving the good faith of Spain—ostensibly a neutral power. A scout brought news that British officers were drilling the Indians in the public square at Pensacola while Maurequez, the governor, entertained the officers of the British fleet in his house.

"It takes six weeks to send a message to Washington and get an answer," said Jackson, "but I'll report conditions and fight before they can stop me."

He flung off a letter to the secretary of war that was much in the tone of a despairing parent appealing to a stupid and erring son to mend his ways. Highly pleased with this deliverance he trimmed a fresh quill for an assault upon Governor Maurequez, that imbecile—that two-faced, slinking Spanish scoundrel! This fervid communication Jackson read to his staff with keen satisfaction.

" 'Spain had better look to her own active commotions before she walks forth in the majesty of strength and power which you threaten to draw down upon the United States. Your Excellency has been candid enough to admit your having supplied the Indians with arms. In addition to this, I have learned that a British flag has been seen flying on one of your forts. All this is done whilst you are pretending to be neutral. You can not be surprised then, but on the contrary will provide a fort in your town for my soldiers and Indians should I take it in my head to pay you a visit. In future I beg of you to withhold your insulting charges against my government for one more inclined to listen to your slander than I am; nor consider me any more as a diplomatic character unless so proclaimed to you from the mouths of my cannon.'

"Fowler, put plenty of red wax on that and send it to the garlic-soaked fool by a reliable messenger. Butler"—he addressed his adjutant—"I want you to start for Tennessee at once and bring me all the men you can get. Tell John Coffee we've got some more work to do down here."

With Pensacola to watch on the one hand and Mobile on the other Jackson did not lack for occupation while he waited for reinforcements.

"The old man's swearin' in his grandest style. I reckon there'll be some fightin' pretty soon," his orderly confided to his messmates.

Furious vituperations were evoked at headquarters by the news, seeping through to Mobile, that the British had burned Washington and driven President Madison from the White House with Dolly, his wife, clutch-

ing the original draft of the Declaration of Independence and Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Washington.

"My God! they let themselves be licked. It's a national disgrace," fumed Jackson to his staff. "I reckon we needn't expect any orders from the capital. The British will have a fleet down here pretty soon unless they're bigger fools than I think 'em."

"We'd better stop 'em here," he said as he surveyed the fortifications at Fort Bowyer, an abandoned redoubt on Mobile Point, "or they'll be hopping into New Orleans."

To young Major William Lawrence with a hundred and sixty men he committed the defense of the fort and prepared to repel an invasion by land.

Nervous times for the lord of the Hermitage. A force of British marines and Indians landed between the town and the fort. Nothing so serious in that; but on the same September day four British war vessels lazily appeared off the fort. Tentative exchanges of shots with the ships and more aggressive movements by the land forces kept the Americans busy. The Indians did not relish the fire of the American howitzers, and cooperation with a naval force was new to their warfare. The fleet daringly ran into the channel within close range of the fort's guns and the battle was on. Knowing the inadequacy of the fort's defenses and expecting an easy conquest the British pounded the walls furiously; but the American guns were well served. The languorous southern air quivered with the roar. The brig *Hermes*, riddled by Lawrence's fire, went adrift and her commander set her on fire and

withdrew with his wounded to another vessel. As the sun went down the three remaining ships limped away followed by derisive salutes from the Americans. As night settled upon the scene flames of the burning ship gave the battle-worn garrison a chance to estimate the price of their victory.

Four dead and ten wounded were the total American casualties of the fierce bombardment. Three hundred cannon-balls had shattered the walls of the fort. Major Billy Lawrence had acquitted himself with highest honor against great odds, and Jackson learned with ironic satisfaction that the commanders of two of the ships were the sons of earls! Toward midnight the powder magazine of the burning *Hermes* exploded with a roar that reverberated round the bay.

"I hope old Maurequez has plenty of wine to console the friends we've sent back to him," remarked Jackson as the British land force fled in disorder toward Pensacola. "By God! that boy Lawrence is a soldier! All hell couldn't have driven him out of that fort!"

At dawn he was busy writing a report of the battle, full of generous praise of his subordinates. Mobile was safe for the time being but from New Orleans the news was disquieting. There, he foresaw, would be a supreme test of America's strength. The Mississippi must be held. Let 'em sleep in Washington; the Southwest would hold the river!

He overlooked nothing. Reid and Fowler were busy copying his letters—to Claiborne, the Governor of Louisiana; to Blount, Governor of Tennessee; and appeals that rang like trumpet calls to Louisiana to prepare "to

rally round the eagle of Columbia!" Remembering that there was a considerable number of free negroes in Louisiana he appealed to them to prepare to resist the invader. The army paymaster at New Orleans protested that his authority did not cover payments to negro volunteers and Jackson wrote a slashing reply bidding him obey and leave technical points for adjudication by his superiors. Impudent, insolent, meddlesome ass! The commander never expressed himself so felicitously as when rebuking insubordination.

In spite of physical ills his spirits soared at news that the always trustworthy Coffee was near at hand and he rode forth to meet him. Riding at the head of two thousand men Coffee brought verbal reports of Rachel's well being and a letter of home news and wifely cautions as to his health.

"Mrs. Jackson warned me, sir, to see that you don't sleep on damp ground and she sent some blankets which I'll dig out of my stores to-morrow."

"I don't need the blankets; it's her faith in me that counts," said Jackson gravely.

"All Tennessee has that now. The fact that you're in command down here has increased confidence in the ability of the country to win the war."

"By the Eternal! there's no question of losing!" cried Jackson. "All I ask of the government is to send me men—and no damned fool orders! If I waited for orders my men would rot in camp! I'm going to take another poke at the British in Pensacola and shake the back teeth out of that damned Spanish governor."

"But we're not at war with Spain," suggested Coffee.

"We are if I march on Pensacola!" Jackson retorted with a glimmer of humor in his eyes.

He set off for Pensacola with three thousand men to pay a call on Governor Maurequez and the British who had been so hospitably entertained under the Spanish flag. He sent an officer forward with a flag of truce to request an interview with the governor. The flag was fired on. Jackson bristled and ordered his men to bivouac.

A Spanish corporal, prowling on the outskirts of the town, was sent to the governor with an inquiry as to the meaning of the hostile reception by a power ostensibly at peace with the United States.

The reply from Maurequez was a whimper that he was virtually at the mercy of the British and would be glad of any suggestions the American commander might make as to his unhappy plight.

"Cowardly jackass! I'll clean 'im out!" roared Jackson. He called for the surrender of the town and when Maurequez refused Jackson instantly gave orders to attack.

In the face of strongly fortified blockhouses, Spanish artillery and citizens firing from windows and garden walls, and with a British squadron anchored in the harbor, Jackson loosened the dogs of war on Pensacola. The stage was set to his taste; he was having a good time! While the firing was still going on he rode through the streets, a target for snipers until, passing the governor's mansion, Maurequez tumbled out, trembling with fear, and declared that he would meet all the demands of the Americans.

"My position has been difficult, sir, extremely difficult!" he cried, wringing his hands. "With my small force it has been impossible to resist the British. They have taken every advantage of my weakness; I have been powerless to resist. I assure you that I have had no purpose but to maintain strict neutrality."

"That, sir, is between you and your God," Jackson answered spaciously. "I demand that you immediately send orders to your people to stop firing on my troops. I shall occupy your forts peaceably or by force. I've been very patient with you, sir, and if I catch you in any further duplicity I'll blow you and your damned town into the sea!"

Maurequez delivered the town, but the British blew up Fort Barrancas six miles down the bay before Jackson could seize it and their war-ships stood out to sea bearing the land forces, which had taken refuge in Pensacola after the little affair at Fort Bowyer. Jackson's rage at the barrenness of his triumph was enhanced by the suspicion that Maurequez had connived at the withdrawal of the British.

"The lying hypocrite! He pretended to be grateful for my assistance in ridding him of the British! I reckon it wouldn't occur to those numskulls in Washington that a few American war-ships might help in defending this coast. I can't chase ships over the ocean in canoes!"

He was not all bluster and curses—the lord of the Hermitage! His alert mind was functioning swiftly. Mobile must be watched; he left a force there against the possibility that the shaky walls of Fort Bowyer

might again be assaulted. But New Orleans! There was the vital point! To lose it would be to lose the Mississippi. A sense of the danger there had haunted him since his voyage with Rachel in that year that was still golden in his memory.

He was sending letters express to the governor at Knoxville and included a brief letter to Rachel.

"Be not concerned, my dearest. The God of your Bible is with us. We shall give the infamous foes of our country a beating they will long remember. My best love to our dear son. There is no hour in which I do not hold you both in my thoughts. When things have settled in New Orleans I shall have headquarters there for some time and shall want you to join me. The men are in good spirits. God bless our Tennesseans! Never was valor equal to theirs. I hope the bay mare Cricket serves you well in the saddle. If there's an excess of corn better sell it. Bob Hays will counsel you. I hope Philip got well of the trouble in his leg—he's one of the most faithful of our black people. I miss his care of my horses. . . . Sweet it will be to feel your arms around me again. Be assured I am well . . ."

Only Fowler and Reid knew the fortitude with which daily he overcame pain and weakness!

On to New Orleans! He sent eleven thousand men westward and followed with only his staff, riding slowly to study the country.

The approach of the general who was to save their city had keyed the frightened inhabitants to a high pitch of expectancy. The committee that rode out to meet him included Governor Claiborne, Mayor Girod

and Commodore Patterson and half a dozen private citizens. They had imagined him an imposing person, garbed in keeping with his rank for a ceremonious entrance into the imperiled city. But as they paused and left their carriages a lean, sallow cadaver of a man rode forward and drawing himself erect saluted by touching the narrow vizor of a shabby leathern cap. The cap and the blue cloak that hung from his shoulders were mementoes picked up in the streets of Pensacola. The jack-boots that covered his attenuated legs were plastered with mud; his cavalry jacket was threadbare. The fashionably appareled welcoming committee was embarrassed, not a little appalled as this most unpromising person dismounted and tossed his bridle rein to an orderly.

"Major-General Jackson, gentlemen: at your service."

It was only when they heard his voice, met the gaze of the blue eyes and felt the firm grip of his hand that they were assured that no trick was being played upon them.

"Edward Livingston!"

Both Jackson's hands went out and a smile lighted his stern worn face.

Livingston, the kind, helpful friend of those early Philadelphia days! He, too, had changed. Life had not been wholly kind to the child of the Hudson manor-house. Mayor of the City of New York after his experiences in the Congress, an embezzlement by a subordinate, for which he was in nowise responsible, had so wrought upon his sensitive nature that he had re-

moved to New Orleans and was now the leading lawyer of Louisiana.

"We have much to say to each other," he said in his old charming way, "but Louisiana and New Orleans must first bid you welcome."

They bore him away to the handsome house of a wealthy citizen where a feast had been prepared in honor of the commander. All the luxuries the soil and the sea afforded were offered, but Jackson, busy asking questions of the mayor and governor as to the attitude of the mixed population toward the war and the latest reports of the enemy, betrayed a discouraging lack of appetite. His host, distressed that the distinguished guest touched none of the delicacies placed before him asked solicitiously what would be more acceptable.

"A dish of boiled hominy," Jackson replied. "And I prefer corn whisky to wine."

He did not tell them that the eating of any but the simplest foods caused him the greatest agony. Here was a man on whom they must rely for the defense of their city and he was evidently an invalid! With pungent questions he uncovered the fact that New Orleans, the great gateway of the South, was practically without defenses. They observed that their frank answers caused the jaws of his long face to set more tightly as the plight of their city was revealed. The inventory of dangers included a fleet of fifty British war-ships at Jamaica with transports ready to fling a great force of redcoats at New Orleans. And another item was the renewal of British activity among the Indians in Florida for use in land operations against the Americans.

The British ships were captained by sailors of reputation; the accompanying soldiers were seasoned veterans commanded by officers with distinguished records. The readily surmised purpose of the expedition was to seize New Orleans, and tie the Gulf with Canada. The gentlemen of New Orleans eyed one another furtively. To cope with this formidable array the government had sent this sick man from Nashville!

"The situation is serious. We hope you don't think it desperate," remarked Governor Claiborne anxiously.

"I'd never call any situation desperate," Jackson retorted, his eyes glinting. "We will save the city and hold the river! The future of this nation demands that we succeed; we'll not consider failure!"

He established headquarters in a three-story building in Royal Street and became at once the busiest man in America. He summoned engineers to enlighten him as to the depths of Lakes Borgne and Pontchartrain—no assumptions, no speculations, but facts, he demanded sternly. Staff officers and messengers galloped through the streets. He rejoiced in his freedom from interference. Wilkinson—that putrid mass of maggots!—was failing in the Northwest and was well on his way to dismissal from the army. The polyglot population—Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italians, Creoles, negroes speaking a patois compounded of all the white tongues—woke from their lethargy as the strange-looking chieftain in the three-story building on Royal Street began operations. There were mutterings over the tables in the wine-shops and cafés. This sudden display of energy was disturbing. It might not be so evil a thing if

the Americans were driven out—those awkward frontier folk who so unaccountably preferred whisky to wine and were so damnably industrious. But the imaginations of the volatile Creoles began to kindle as they rushed to the doors to see the general clattering by with his staff, always in a hurry and evidently knowing what he was about.

There was no bayou, levee, swamp or foot of waterfront the vigilant commander didn't survey. "Did he never sleep?" the wondering Creoles asked themselves, hearing from startled fishermen who sought safety in the city that he had ridden upon them out of a fog near Bayou Sauvage and passed on like a ghost. Napoleon's star was paling; maybe the sick general in Royal Street would prove to be another world hero!

Yankee Doodle and the *Marseillaise* began to alternate in the streets.

"We'll not be shot in the back," Jackson declared heatedly to Fowler, Reid and others of his staff who reported that British emissaries had stolen into the city promising the Latin population that after Louisiana was taken the British would turn it back to Spain.

"I don't question it!" cried Jackson heatedly. "The civil authorities trifle with the situation! They've done nothing toward defending their city! There must be no question of who's the master here. Governor Claiborne means well but he's curbed by a fool legislature. The French mayor is a pest and a nuisance! I've no time to fool with puttering civilians—I'll declare martial law!"

His listeners moved uneasily in their chairs. The lord of the Hermitage was angry. They must quiet him

a little. A collision with the governor must be avoided. Claiborne was an American gentleman and meant well; not a slinking whelp like that Spaniard Maurequez. Jackson mustn't be encouraged in his weakness for teaching governors good manners. With a lawyer's caution Livingston suggested reasons against so drastic a step. The people would resent it as an imputation upon their loyalty. And serious legal complications would follow.

"Wouldn't it be well to have the authority of the president?" asked Fowler. "Martial law is an extraordinary process. The federal and state authorities may resist."

"Let 'em!" replied Jackson succinctly. "I'll prepare my proclamation at once."

CHAPTER XXX

THE SICK FARMER FROM TENNESSEE

"JEAN LAFITTE, waiting to see General Jackson!" an orderly announced.

Every man at headquarters was instantly on his feet with eyes bent anxiously on the door. Jackson laughed at their alarm.

"Put up your pistols, gentlemen! I don't believe he's come to assassinate me. He speaks English, does he? Very, well, I will see him alone."

Jackson's curiosity was instantly aroused by the propinquity of his visitor. At Mobile he had heard of the Lafitte brothers as the leaders of a powerful band of outlaws operating from Barataria, a district below New Orleans composed of a bewildering tangle of bayous, islands, marshes and lakes—a wild desolate region, fit hiding-place for pirates, smugglers or privateersmen, and Jean Lafitte and his two brothers were reputed to be successful followers of all three of these vocations. The British, aware of the daring of the Lafittes and anxious to secure pilots who knew the Delta waterways, had negotiated for their services. Captaincies in the British navy and thirty thousand dollars in cash had been offered for their allegiance.

All that he had heard of the Lafittes had interested Jackson. He was thinking rapidly. If the British were

so anxious to secure their services the Baratarians would be equally valuable to the American cause. He would have a look at this Frenchman, who, originally a blacksmith, had left the forge and anvil for the more diverting career of a sea bandit.

Lafitte—a short stocky man, well dressed, with his long black hair in a queue and neatly tied with a black ribbon—crossed the threshold. He bowed with a flourish of his straw sombrero.

"I am that bad Jean Lafitte!" he began suavely with a slight ironic smile and then proceeded in a curious staccato compelled by his imperfect English—"You fight: so do I—with feest, gun or knife. Governor Claiborne, he do not trus' *me*—Jean Lafitte! His Excellency is mos'—what you say?—timide! He have refuse to accept my Baratarians for driving away those Briteesh. I—Jean Lafitte—am a man of honor. But His Excellency—he no have confidence in those wicked Lafitte! Yet I geeve him Briteesh letter offering gold to the Baratarians." He lifted his head proudly. "We Baratarians not for sale, Generale Jacksone! I geeve firs' warning of many Briteesh war-ships approach' from Jamaica. You fight: I see by your eyes you not talk but fight! Generale, I offer you five hun'erd men! But, before you mak' reply—read!"

He snatched from his pocket a piece of paper, roughly folded, struck it smartly with the tips of his fingers to free it of bits of tobacco, and extended it to Jackson.

"It is from a lady who call you frien'."

Jackson frowned, took the paper and read:

"You may trust the bearer, Jean Lafitte. He has generously befriended me in adversity. You will find him trustworthy and able to fulfil his promises. I know the conditions here and am confident he can render you important service. Your hour of glory is near at hand—as I told you in Richmond."

There was no signature, but only one hand could have penned it. The paper was the flyleaf of a book, yellow with age; the handwriting was clearly produced by tremulous fingers.

"Madame—she is ver-ree seek—ver-ree poor; lodging in the house of my frien', Babette Nourrisson. Madame—a lady of meestery—she not long for the life."

"You may present my compliments and thank the lady," said Jackson gravely. "I regret to hear of her illness."

Seven years of silence, and Lady Melderode now brought herself to his attention to certify to the honor of an outlaw! Remembering that Fowler was in the next room Jackson tore the note into tiny bits. The woman's word was not without weight, but it only strengthened his own judgment that the Baratarian could be trusted. As they talked further it was evident that Lafitte was deeply outraged by the treatment he had received after he had reported the British offer to the governor. Commodore Patterson had invaded the freebooters' stronghold, destroyed their ships and taken many of the Baratarians prisoners, when they, foolish children, had expected American gratitude! Five minutes of rapid questioning and Jackson was satisfied.

He liked the Baratarian's candor. There was a humor in him that tickled the commander; then, too, his sense of justice was touched by the outlaw's indignation at the rejection of his services by the civil authorities.

He struck the table smartly with his stick to summon the orderly and called Livingston and the others who had been waiting into the room.

"Gentlemen," he began briskly, "Mr. Jean Lafitte is now enlisted in the service of the United States. Captain Reid will administer the usual oath. Colonel Butler, you will accept such of the Baratarians as Mr. Lafitte recommends. Assign them to duty as Mr. Lafitte advises."

"You'll eat your Christmas dinner in New Orleans!" Cochrane, the British Admiral, had boasted to the men of his fleet.

On the twenty-third of December it seemed possible that he would keep his promise. The British controlled Lake Borgne, but between it and New Orleans lay a diversity of bayous, cypress swamps, dikes and ditches not pleasing to a lord admiral of the sea. Sailors and redcoats poled their way in barges through Bayou Bienview and camped on Villere's plantation. Young Major Villere, escaping under a fusillade of British musketballs, galloped into the city and gave warning of the enemy's approach.

At the Royal Street house Jackson received the news calmly; issued orders swiftly. Commodore Patterson with the schooners *Carolina* and *Louisiana* was ordered down the river. Coffee was in motion with his mounted

riflemen who, cheerful souls, had brought along their hunting knives and hatchets. Batteries of artillery rumbled to the front; the Orleans Rifle Company, the Mississippi Dragoons, companies of regulars, battalions of the free negroes Jackson had urged into the service and a band of Choctaws in war paint were flung forward to arrest the invader.

Contemptuous reports of the American forces were borne back to the British commanders by the withdrawing pickets. It was near the end of the day and no offensive was expected from the oddly assorted battalions of Americans visible on the New Orleans road.

Jackson, worn with his day's labors, flung himself on a couch and slept half an hour while Fowler replaced the orderly at the door and received reports. Waking refreshed the commander ate a few spoonfuls of rice as he listened to Fowler's recital of the disposition of the troops.

"The enemy are camped on Villere's plantation. They'll hardly strike until they have reinforcements from their fleet."

"Patterson's on the way down the river? Good. Is Livingston here?"

"Yes; and he reports the Louisiana militia in fine spirits and anxious to show their patriotism. Your orders are all executed. Governor Claiborne remains in town with General Carroll's troops to guard against a flank movement."

"Get the staff together and we'll ride down to the front. If things look right we'll stir 'em up a little tonight."

The shadows of the winter twilight gathered upon the plain. Jackson gazed across the British bivouac, brilliantly lighted by their camp-fires; sent a messenger to signal Patterson on the *Carolina* to begin firing when he got in position.

The British, not expecting an attack, thought the American schooner a trading ship and were aware of their error only when the cannon began booming. The camp-fires were at once extinguished but the sudden assault, followed at once by vigorous pressure by the American line, shook the morale of the invaders and they were slow in forming to resist the attack. For two hours and a half the battle raged in the dark. Bayonets on the British side and hunting-knives in the hands of the Kentuckians and Tennesseans were plied fiercely as the battle lines clashed and clinched. This hand to hand fighting in the dark, against a foe of uncertain numbers, with black and red faces to contend with and wild white men in caps made of the skins of wild beasts was not like warfare in Europe! To add to the din and confusion the little *Carolina* belched hot shot at intervals and now and again the terrified redcoats heard the shrill high voice of the American commander shouting orders, cheering on his men.

A smothering fog drifted up from the sea and Jackson decided to risk no more that night. Not so formidable, those British! He would wait for a chance to clean them up in daylight!

"This is only a little Christmas fandango," he remarked to Coffee. "They've got to hurry if they hand Louisiana to their king for a Christmas present!"

"We've picked up seventy-four prisoners," Reid reported. "They thought they'd march right into town but this night attack's chilled 'em. There'll hardly be another move till the big chief arrives—General Sir Edward Packenham. His men say he'll make short work of us—he's brother-in-law to the Duke of Wellington."

"Let 'em send the duke!" said Jackson with a sardonic grin. "We'll take him home to Nashville in a basket!"

In the gray dawn of Christmas morning the American pickets reported that the night had been marked by great activity in the British camp. The enemy had pushed forward their artillery and additional infantry. Within a few hours lusty cheering announced that Packenham had arrived to take command.

Coffee feinted at intervals with detachments of cavalry and the *Carolina,* hanging along the west bank of the river dropped a shot into the enemy's camp occasionally.

"Keep 'em worried," were Jackson's orders. "We need time to establish our lines."

The city and the neighboring plantations were ransacked for picks and spades and with furious energy the Americans began building entrenchments. Not for nothing had the commander established military law! All the horses, oxen and mules in the region were hauling timbers and cotton bales to strengthen the breastworks. Soft-handed citizens accepted without grumbling the rough labor assigned them. Mutinous mutterings were silenced as Jackson rode the lines,

scolding, praising, exacting every ounce of strength the hard-driven laborers could bring to their task. He had established headquarters in a planter's house close to the breastworks, and partaking sparingly of his rice ration and sleeping not at all, he strengthened and lengthened his line.

The insolence of the *Carolina* having at last become insufferable, Packenham planted his heaviest ordnance on the levee and for half an hour the little vessel gallantly responded to the British cannon. Set on fire by a hot ball that landed near her powder chests the commander gave orders to abandon ship. The crew fired a final broadside and left her only a few minutes before she blew up with a mighty explosion.

The *Louisiana* got away to the western side of the river and Jackson turned his spy-glass upon the enemy's land forces.

Posted on the levee, the sick man from the Hermitage summarized recent history with satisfaction. Packenham might be a great strategist by European standards, but he had dallied three days in the presence of an enemy greatly inferior on land and sea when he might have eaten his Christmas pudding in New Orleans if he had made a determined offensive.

"By the Eternal! He'll never get there!" Jackson declared, and turned to find Jean Lafitte beside him. A modest gentleman, the pirate of Barataria! He merely wished to announce that his men, among them skilled artillerists, had been assigned to service in keeping with their talents and that they would give a good account of themselves.

"My frien's of Barataria know not the wor' fear! They know onl-ee to fight and die!" he declared. "In what way can I serve you, Generale Jacksone?"

Jackson, pleased with his zeal, gave him a message to carry with all speed to Commodore Patterson across the river. The British were already advancing in two magnificent columns as if on parade. One line moved along the river, the other skirted the fringes of a cypress swamp. Ignorant of the extent of the American entrenchments, the British veterans marched to within six hundred yards of the American lines only to falter and retreat before a devastating fire.

Packenham, (knighted for valor at Salamanca over yonder in Spain!) watched with amazement and mortification the repulse of the best troops in the British Army by American backwoodsmen. Through his glass he had caught a glimpse the day before of the American commander, who wasn't a general at all—only a frontier farmer and a sick man at that! Pestiferous fellows, those Tennessee riflemen; every time one fired there was a redcoat the less. A poor yarn this adventure would make for the drawing-rooms when he got back to London! To echoing cheers from the American lines he withdrew bewilderedly, to confer with Cochrane, the admiral.

Neither Sir Edward nor the admiral understood the ways of the Americans. They were constantly abroad on terrifying errands. Most annoying were the movements of Tom Hinds, a young and handsome Mississippian who, abroad on reconnaisance duty, swept with a company of dragoons close to British batteries, deliv-

ered a deadly musket fire and galloped away in safety. Even more fearsome were Coffee's Tennesseans in their homespun, prowling about at night, a terror to pickets, stragglers and reconnoitering parties.

More guns must be brought from the ships and dragged through that thrice damned network of swamps and bayous! To add to the general joylessness, it rained frequently. The British seamen were vastly annoyed by the queer reptiles that snapped at their legs. At dusk the breeze wafted across the plain the mocking strains of a band attached to Planche's Orleans battalion playing the *Marseillaise*!

"Let all the bands play," Jackson ordered. "Music will be soothing to Sir Edward's feelings!"

He surveyed the wrecked British batteries grimly. He had won the day but the greater struggle was yet to come. Ammunition was not reaching his lines as he expected, and he held Governor Claiborne responsible.

"Send me powder and ball or by the Eternal! I'll cut off your head and ram it into a cannon!"

This clearly was no way to address a governor. Harassed by a thousand annoyances and tormented by pain it was well that the commander's vituperative gifts afforded outlet for his emotions. Kentucky's long delayed phalanx arrived at New Orleans half clad and without arms. Jackson swore brilliantly, but ordered the city's shops and warehouses raided for equipment. He was giving personal attention to every detail of his defenses, guarding against every imaginable peril. He had established three successive lines of defense in case the first shouldn't hold. While the British were at their

elaborate preparations the sick lord of the Hermitage had three thousand men strengthening his lines even though they had already survived massed infantry assaults and the thumping of cannon. The cotton bales used in the embrasures of some of the batteries failed to resist and Jackson replaced them with Delta mud, which, he had noted, sucked up cannon balls.

One o'clock in the morning. Fowler touched the commander's shoulder as he lay asleep in his uniform in the plantation house.

"What day is this?" Jackson demanded, at once on his feet buckling on his sword.

"The eighth of January. The enemy are preparing to attack. Butler has issued orders to all officers to be ready."

"Call Reid and come with me; we'll ride our lines. I want to see John Coffee."

He wanted to see John Coffee! Comforting, indeed, on a murky morning, with a big job on hand, to have old Coffee within reach; fearless John Coffee, a military genius in his own right, but loved as a friend and neighbor. There was a moral stimulus to be got just from hearing the old fellow's gruff voice and feeling the touch of his hand. And Coffee, of course, was over there, where he had been told to be, at the edge of the cypress swamp with his men of the Cumberland. Many of them had slept on logs to lift them out of the slime.

As the day broke grudgingly a shotted rocket from the British lines hissed through the mists and fell into the river.

"The scoundrels have got to shoot better than that," Jackson commented to his staff as they watched the zigzag course of the fiery missile.

Pickets, falling back through the fog, announced the British advance. Out of the hovering mists they came, like an army with banners seen in a dream. A cannon boomed as an American gunner caught sight of them; then the fog curtained them again. The air was clearing and the Americans saw the approaching enemy—a magnificent pageant under the flags of their hard-won victories in the Old World.

Back of the center of his lines, unattended for the moment, Jackson saw them, knew that his great hour had come. In his breast pocket was Rachel's last letter, and he thrust in his hand to touch it. He would not have Rachel ashamed of what he should do this day!

"Take your time, men," he was saying as he walked along his lines swinging his cane. "Be sure the squirrel's on your side of the tree before you shoot!"

The earth trembled as the American batteries thundered. Gaps in the solid British lines were quickly closed only to be ripped open again by murderous grape and cannister. In mighty diapasons the cannon roared and in interludes the rifles of the frontiersmen caught up the strain with the rippling roll of a thousand drums. Damned good shots, those Baratarians! Jackson sent his compliments to Jean Lafitte. The British batteries, helpless to support the three thousand infantry that charged the American breastworks, fell back, confused, appalled by the pitiless hail of iron and lead that beat upon their faces. Gibbs, in

immediate command of the movement, sought in vain to check the panic.

"Bring up the reserves!" Packenham ordered, urging his horse through his broken staggering army. His men regained confidence as General Keane flung in a regiment of Highlanders. Brave Scots! Two hundred perished in the raking fire of a single American cannon.

Packenham in a frantic effort to rally his men rode to the head of his legion. Shot in the arm, he kept on. Falling a moment later he died without knowing the extent of the catastrophe that had befallen his army.

Eight o'clock. The smoke cleared and the mounting sun revealed a trail of death on the miry plain. They lay in windrows—two thousand valiant Britons—as if cut down by some monstrous scythe. Only on the west bank of the river had the invaders won any advantage and this availed nothing as against the crushing defeat of the main army on the Chalmette plain.

Gazing across the blood-drenched field Jackson raised his hand in salute.

"Brave fellows!" he exclaimed brokenly. "There are many of their wounded lying among the dead. Order the men to stop cheering and send our doctors over the field."

Quills were flying the next morning in the commander's headquarters; couriers groomed their horses for hard riding. Washington, Knoxville and Nashville must know the news. Sam Dale, a Mississippian, endeared to the commander by his feats of daring, was chosen to bear the news to the president. Coffee picked the other messengers from his Tennesseans—intrepid

youngsters proud of the chance to carry the great news home to the neighbors. Jackson had Livingston, Reid and Fowler at work while he was still issuing orders to guard against a renewal of hostilities. Rachel must know from him the victory and he wrote her, first of all, to say that the British were whipped and that he himself was well.

"I hope, my dear love, that you may join me here soon, but not until all is safe. The city is joyfully celebrating the triumph, but I remain on the field. My men have been bringing in a queer lot of odds and ends from the battle-field—the instruments of the Scotch Highlander's band, General Packenham's chapeau, General Keane's trumpet and sword. The British threw away their guns as they ran and our men have been collecting them. You will gather from this the completeness of the rout. My best love to our dear boy. Be careful of yourself. Amid all these moving scenes you fill my heart. I am eager to be at the Hermitage again, but while my country needs me we must sacrifice our own happiness and peace."

He was busy with his report to President Madison when his orderly handed him a paper. Incredible! Only six Americans killed and seven wounded. The British loss of more than two thousand included the lieutenant-general commanding, two major-generals, eight colonels, six majors, eighteen captains and fifty-four lieutenants. On the west side of the river the American casualties were one killed and five wounded against the enemy's loss of one hundred and twenty killed and wounded.

"God was with us!" exclaimed Jackson reverently.

"A committee of citizens to see you, General," reported Fowler.

"Thank them and say I'll not be ready for entertainment till I've finished my business here. When I go into the city I'll march with the men who won the victory. We'll not do any bragging till we know the enemy's satisfied. If they want more punishment we must be ready to give it to 'em."

But with their most distinguished officers killed and the rain-splashed plain one vast grave, the British were already creeping back through the swamps to their ships, sending the conqueror a quite unnecessary request that he care for the wounded they were leaving behind.

CHAPTER XXXI

LADY MELDERODE AGAIN

WHEN the lord of the Hermitage was at last ready to receive the thanks of the grateful city he dressed with care in the ceremonial uniform of his rank —a gorgeous affair with high embroidered collar and glittering epaulettes. The chapeau, resting lightly on the proud head (the reddish hair now somewhat sprinkled with gray!) emphasized the austere lines of the long thin face. But the boy in him was awake again; his histrionic sense quickened at the thought of being the chief actor—the observed of all observers—in the brilliant conclusion of a mighty drama. Erect in the saddle, with hat in hand he acknowledged the plaudits of the people between lines of fluttering flags, while cheers drowned the triumphal martial music.

A long and perilous road indeed, that had brought him from the Waxhaw cabin to this consummation!

There must be toasting and feasting but amid all the acclaim he remembered that Rachel would fall upon her knees in thanks to God when she heard of the victory, and he dispatched a note to the Abbé Durourg, apostolic prefect of Louisiana, asking that a thanksgiving service be appointed for the Cathedral. The Latin population, pleased and touched by the consideration given their faith, must make a special day of this, with a

triumphal arch set up for their deliverer in the square before the church. In the full panoply of war he passed under the arch and dismounted to receive the laurel wreaths presented by two children. Through an aisle formed of young women in white, each wearing a silver star on her forehead and holding a shield inscribed with the name of a state or territory, he walked over a carpet of flowers to the Cathedral door to be received with all dignity by the abbé. He responded to the abbé's address in fitting terms, turning to the great throng in the square to hold up the laurel as he feelingly declared that it rightfully belonged on the brows of his soldiers. Escorted to the chancel, he sat like some exalted crusader while the *Te Deum* was sung; sniffed the incense; wished Rachel were there to see!

As he left the church he found Jean Lafitte beside him.

"The poor madame—your frien'—she more seek. She beg the favor of one wor' with Generale Jacksone. He say—the docteur—she not long to stay now."

He would not deny the request of a dying woman. To his staff he made some excuse and, taking a carriage to avoid attention, drove with Lafitte to the outskirts of the city and followed the buccaneer through a vineyard to the most pretentious house in the neighborhood.

"Ah! how generous, my great General!" murmured the stricken woman feebly, with an effort extending her hand. "I thought maybe you would give me one little moment. Behold in me a true prophetess! I told you in Richmond that great glory would come to you.

Poor Packenham! I knew him in the old days in England. He would have been more discreet if he had known you as I do."

Lafitte had left the room, but a woman lingered a moment to draw back the curtains and place a handkerchief within reach of the invalid.

"You are comfortable, madam?" Jackson asked kindly as he sat down by the bed. "These people are giving you good attention?"

"Oh, yes; dear friend of my happier days! She is a kindly soul, Babette Nourrisson. Her husband is Jean's agent for the sale of booty to the honorable merchants of the city. How droll! Here I am, dying in the house of a pirate! It was Pierre Nourrisson who served your cannon so well. What can you do? Dear God, it is only a matter of waiting. I've so long been a wanderer, dear General, and now I'm ready for my last journey."

"You must have courage, dear lady. It's possible that with the spring——"

"My springs have all gone by! I have no heart to meet another."

Her cough that had several times stopped her speech, brought a look of agony to her face; but she smiled as the paroxysm ceased, put out her thin white hand with an appeal more poignant than her voice.

"He is here—my husband?" she asked softly. "I somehow think of him as always near you."

"Yes; he's attached to my staff as a volunteer aide. He's rendered me the greatest service."

"Ah, I can believe that! He would do all things well,"

she replied and a tender light came into her eyes. "Dare I ask one more favor of you—my last! Perhaps you would let me see him now. It would make easier the going away if I could have his forgiveness. I do not blame you for shipping me out of Nashville. We could never have understood each other, he and I; the gulf was too wide. I could only have grieved and wounded him as you were wise enough to see. I believe, my Lord, you have a way of being right. How strange that I should be admitting it!"

It was beyond her power to inflict further injury upon the man she had so grievously wronged; and Fowler, Jackson was confident, would not withhold forgiveness in the last hour of her life. He stepped to the door and asked Madame Nourrisson for writing materials; wrote a note to Fowler, bidding him return with the messenger and gave it to Lafitte for delivery.

"Thank you, dear General. A little brandy if you please; it's there on the table. I mustn't fade into nothing before he comes. He doubtless thinks me dead long ago. But men of his sort—the high-bred, self-contained—meet ghosts without emotion."

He supported her shoulders and held the brandy to her lips.

"It's sweet to know you love him," she went on. "And your wife—I know without your telling me that she has been kind to him. How cruel of you not to let me meet her! Afraid of contamination! No wonder! Such a sinner as I've been!"

The brandy had revived her and there was a faint glimmer of the Lady Melderode of old.

"I'm sorry if I wounded you, madam. My wife is a Christian woman and would have met you with all kindness. It was to save my friend pain that I sent you away from Nashville."

"I understand that, and I am grateful to you. But strangely, I have thought much about your wife."

She drew from under the pillows a silken bag and asked him to open it. He loosened the cord, shook out a ring and a small cross of pearls, and held them up for her to see.

"My wedding ring," she murmured, with a vague smile. "How little it is! Let me keep that! This little cross was given me when I was a child, and I've clung to it through all my vicissitudes. It's begun to mean something to me in these last years. I should like your wife to have it—the dying gift of a very bad woman to a very good one! Let me say a little prayer for her and for you——"

She smiled as she saw the tears in his eyes.

"You are a noble gentleman," she said. "She is a fortunate woman who has your love."

Jackson met Fowler on the veranda and explained his summons briefly. Fowler betrayed little suprise; asked no questions.

Madame Nourrisson came out and spoke to Lafitte; the lady was growing weaker; the doctor must be brought at once.

The door of the sick room closed upon Fowler. For half an hour Jackson paced the garden path. The fortunes of war, his responsibilities and duties were not in

his thoughts; he was thinking of the changes and chances of life; of the love that lives and the love that dies.

From the veranda Madame Nourrisson called him.

It was very still in the sick room. On his knees Fowler clasped the hands of the dying woman.

"No bitterness—none!" he was saying. "It shall be as if there had been no unhappiness; as if to-day we were back at the beginning."

And he spoke truly, for memory had opened a long sealed door. . . . It was a bright morning in a June of the long ago, and he proudly walked with his radiant bride from a little church set among green English fields. The bells pealed; all about were smiling faces; the air thrilled with bird song.

"Je suis contente," she whispered, as if she had read his thoughts.

Her eyes opened and she smiled as she recognized Jackson.

"Peace—there is peace—between us all," she murmured drowsily. "Babette, *le bon Dieu* is kind—he will be merciful—to a tired child——"

Madame Nourrisson, repeating the prayers for the dying, made the sign of the cross.

Lady Melderode was dead. A ray of sunlight falling across the quiet hands brightened upon her wedding ring.

They buried her with simple rites at the edge of the Nourrisson's vineyard at twilight the following day. Fowler, Jackson, the Nourrissons, Jean Lafitte and John Coffee were the mourners.

"You will return to England now?" Jackson asked Fowler as they drove into town.

"No; I shall never see England again. My home is among the good folk of Tennessee. I remain John Fowler to the end of my days."

"But you'd have the larger life you were born to over there. There must still be kindred and friends who would welcome you."

"I've nothing to go back to. I'm content to live out my life as an American farmer. I saw the British flag go down before my Tennessee neighbors without a twinge. But I'm still nominally a British subject and as soon as we get home I shall go through the form of naturalization. Something more than the love of American freedom prompts me to stay,"—he laid his hand on Jackson's arm,—"the man I love most in all the world is here."

It was with mixed emotions that Jackson heard—but not until March—definite news that a treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, the day before Christmas, ending the war.

"Well," he ejaculated, "it didn't do any harm to give the British a lickin'. I'm sorry so many of their men had to die, but they'll treat our flag with more respect hereafter."

Since the battle he had been enjoying a succession of collisions with the civil authorities, and the people, seeing in him a fascinating cavalier almost as worthy of adoration as Napoleon, liked his high-handed ways. Quite in the imperial manner he signed writs for the

incarceration of troublesome persons. He ordered a member of the legislature arrested for writing a letter to the Louisiana *Courier* protesting against the prolonged continuance of martial law. Impudent scoundrel! He should do penance for his temerity. Andrew, the audacious lad of Waxhaw Creek, his blood mingling Scotch righteousness and Irish belligerency, was not averse to locking up absurd people who affronted his dignity. When the Honorable Dominick A. Hall, judge of the United States District Court, granted the offender a writ of habeas corpus, Jackson ordered the judge arrested for exciting mutiny and desertion and followed this by ordering the jurist to be escorted to a point five miles from his court-house and turned loose—a shameful indignity.

The judge emerged from his exile on hearing the news of peace, which automatically terminated the Jackson autocracy. Paris in the stormiest days of the terror hardly furnished more stirring entertainment than followed Jackson's citation for contempt. A cheering crowd escorted him to the court-room and its most vociferous members were the black-bearded Baratarians, ready to rescue the American general if any attempt was made to commit him to the New Orleans jail, an institution with which they were all too familiar.

Livingston, acting as Jackson's attorney, was not pleased by the enthusiasm of the populace.

"You shouldn't flout the courts! This will make a bad impression in Washington," said the sober-going counselor.

"I held New Orleans against the British," cried Jack-

son, "and that's a damn sight more than those dullards in Washington did!"

When the crowd in the court-room started a friendly demonstration he rose upon a chair and appealed for order. Order being restored he took his place at the bar, refused to answer the questions propounded by the district attorney, and the judge promptly assessed a fine of one thousand dollars.

"I will give my check," said the general with equal promptness, much to the regret of the audience.

In the street the clamor was renewed and his admirers drew him in a carriage to the Exchange Coffee House where he was toasted in three languages.

John Coffee growled at the whole proceeding; Livingston, amused in spite of himself, devoutly expressed the hope that the hero would keep within the reasonable bounds of authority. Fowler, conferring with Eaton and Reid, saw in the demonstration more than appeared.

"This is only a foretaste of his popularity," he said. "When the nation realizes what he did here against tremendous odds, Old Hickory's going to be the great name in American politics for a long time to come."

"You are right," Eaton assented. "He's going to touch the hearts of the plain people of this country as no other man has done."

But Jackson was not concerned as to what people might say of him. Rachel and little Andrew came down the great river to meet the spring and in full uniform he went to the wharf to receive them.

Along the Mississippi his name had been on every lips and she herself had been cheered—Rachel, the shy little woman of the Hermitage—as the wife of the world's new hero. So many had been their separations, each one marking some new experience or grave peril! Sad was the memory of that night when she had taken him into her arms after the Dickinson duel; and even worse that day when she had been summoned to his side after his body had been shattered in the Benton fight. She had feared that he might be wounded in the battle that had thrilled the broad valley and the fact kept from her; but here he was, looking better than she had dared hope to find him.

She was a little in awe of him now, and was prepared to find that his great achievement had wrought some change in him; but the moment they were alone he began asking about the folks at home, even to the slaves on the plantation, and questioning her as to his horses and what races were being planned at Clover Bottom.

"But, my dearest one, you are saying nothing of yourself or the wonderful things you've done!" Rachel cried at last. "Won't you let me say how proud I am! Wherever we stopped they were praising you. At Natchez all our old friends came to the boat and I had a hard time getting away. And it's all because of what you've done for our country! It's—it's so wonderful—and—and—I feel so humble!"

"I thought you'd know I want to hear about home," he said and caught her to his heart.

"But they all say nobody ever did what you did! I want to know about it from you," she said pleadingly.

"What I did was to whip the British!" he said with a broad smile. "That's all! As soon as I get things straightened out here we'll go back to the Hermitage. I want to see the young lambs nibbling Tennessee grass and hear the wind out of the hills rustling the corn. I'm homesick for Tennessee!"

"I'm so proud of you," he whispered repeatedly at the functions that expressed the city's gratitude to the hero. Always it was as "My dear wife" that he referred to his Rachel. "Such devotion! Such beautiful simplicity!" the Creole ladies remarked over and over again as the dark little woman sat at their tables. His manners were princely, they said, and his wife so gracious and met the requirements of her station with such dignity!

Once, at the Livingstons', Rachel yielded to her host's request to tell the story of that long winter journey with her father through the wilderness. The company was enthralled by the unconscious eloquence of her recital.

"An' she spik of such courage as if it were notting!" exclaimed a Creole dame. "No wonner the generale keel dose Briteesh so easy! He have to be brave man with such a wife!"

When the great ball at the City Exchange was at its height the general sent an orderly in haste to fetch from the Tennessee encampment a fiddler who knew the frontier dances. To the scraping of *Possum up a Gum Tree* the general and Rachel executed reels and jigs that filled the great company with amazement and delight.

"I'm afraid they won't think us dignified," Rachel murmured when, quite breathless, she sat down by Livingston.

"Don't you see how pleased all the people are!" he exclaimed. "Your dancing will do more than a hundred speeches to make Louisiana truly American!"

CHAPTER XXXII

PEACE AT THE HERMITAGE

HOME at the Hermitage! It was sweet to be there again! Tennessee in its pride must pay the hero a tribute so overwhelming that every vestige of the old animosities was obliterated. Rachel, happy in the praise heaped upon her lord, found herself catching again at the hope of peace in their lives. His delight in the boy (now riding a horse in fine imitation of his father!) his joy in the plantation; the jolly evenings when their friends came to sit on the veranda—all contributed to the making of one of the happiest summers Rachel had known. To Fowler, who was much at the house, she opened her heart. If only there might be no more wars! If only they might live out the rest of their days in peace.

"You'll have to let the fates do their will with him," Fowler replied with the sad smile that came often to his face these days. Since his wife's death Rachel's sympathy and kindness amid all the tumult and the shouting that had followed the great victory had done much to sustain his courage. "You'll have to become reconciled to the idea that you have a great man for a husband. We talk it over constantly—Overton, Coffee, Reid, Eaton and the rest of us who are close to him—and it's hardly possible there won't be other things for

him to do. You know," he went on whimsically, "a man becomes conspicuous when the world finds out he never fails!"

"Yes; that's the trouble," she said proudly. "He will never fail in anything!"

Her ministrations through the summer served to bring him to a better state of health than he had known since the Indian campaign. But as the months went by she became conscious that he was now a national figure and that she could not expect to keep him at the Hermitage. He was still a major-general in the United States Army and the salary had greatly eased his financial burdens. Countless letters and newspapers and a stream of visitors were a constant reminder of his growing fame. The powers in Washington wished to consult him as to Indian treaties and the aftermath of his labors in Louisiana.

"They want to see me in Washington," he said one day in the fall as he read his mail. "I wish the trip were not so hard; it would please me if you could go along."

"No; my dear. I would only be a trouble to you. Don't worry about me. You know I always find plenty to do when you're away. And I couldn't leave little Andrew."

She gave him her blessing as so often when he rode away. Very different was this journey into the East from that first journey to Philadelphia. Everywhere the people ran to see him—the hero of New Orleans.

"Here's Old Hickory!" some one would shout as he rode into a village and he must linger at tavern or

blacksmith shop. The boy from Waxhaw Creek who, with no fortune but what he carried in his head and heart, first crossed the mountains into the West was returning now to the capital of the nation to be fêted and cheered. At Lynchburg, where they made a feast for him, some one cried a toast:

"Welcome to Virginia! Napoleon got licked at Waterloo but Old Hickory never gets licked!"

"Napoleon didn't have American riflemen to shoot for him!" retorted Jackson.

If he had done nothing else at New Orleans he had stirred the national consciousness and he thought of this with keen satisfaction as he approached the Potomac, his course a march of triumph. The president received him graciously; statesmen and politicians lauded his achievements while they guardedly appraised his political value.

He didn't like Washington; the jealousies and insincerities depressed or irritated him. It was even worse than he had found Philadelphia in the days of his obscurity. He hurried home to Rachel at the earliest possible moment.

But the peace of the Hermitage was not yet to be realized. Ever since their marriage it had been his dream to give Rachel a house that should fittingly express his love for her. And it was now building, a stately brick mansion not far from their old home. The proper habitation it should be, he said, for the dearest woman in the world. Together they planned it, saw to the planting of trees and shrubbery, dreaming of the peace that now surely would be theirs.

"With a home like this, and a woman like you to sit with me by the fire, I'd be a fool ever to go wandering again," he said as they stood on the pillared veranda of the new Hermitage and looked down the line of young trees he had planted as an approach to their door.

"Yes, my lover, I pray God for peace—home—peace to the end of our lives."

In grim mockery of her wish he was called upon to chastise the Seminoles, who were playing back and forth on the Florida boundary in league with the Choctaws and Creeks. Trouble without end! And it wasn't Jackson's fault if once more he was inspired to invade the territory of the hated Spaniard or caused two British subjects to be court-martialed and shot for inciting the red men.

"Damn it!" he exclaimed when Fowler suggested the danger of international complications. "They needn't send me on their little errands with my hands and feet tied!"

Fowler, with much letter-writing to do for his busy general, was obliged to laugh as the commander, away down on the Suwannee River, whipped the Seminoles and again pricked the touchy Spaniards with the point of his sword. While Congress debated and diplomatists fenced over his performances the gentleman from the Cumberland went home to rest and explain those bothersome complications to Rachel.

"The trouble is, my dearest, that you move too fast for those men at Washington. But the home-folks understand you. I wouldn't be worried by the politicians."

Not only did the home-folks approve of him but his popularity spread through the country like a forest fire. Let the Congress of the United States investigate; let Henry Clay denounce! The people approved of him; he was surfeited with attentions. Baltimore ordered his portrait; New York handed him the freedom of the city in a gold casket. In Washington, whither he went to watch events, he kept his temper pretty well; only occasionally declaring his purpose to slice the ears from some critic's head. No man since Washington so piqued curiosity and touched the popular fancy.

"At the White House reception," Fowler wrote to Rachel, "our general attracted more attention than the president."

"What these politicians are doing," Reid declared, "is to make him the most popular man in America. If they dare to punish him for his course in Florida they'll be sure to make him president."

Out of the storm in Congress Andrew the Audacious emerged triumphant, with a list of distinguished enemies to be dealt with as occasion offered. Florida was acquired at last by treaty, but only after vexatious delays.

"Five million dollars for Florida!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "They'd better have let me march into Florida and shoot the Spaniards out!"

They were hardly settled in the new Hermitage before their tranquillity was disturbed by an offer of the governorship of Florida by President Monroe, who had, it seemed, a feeling that the man who had done so much to advertise to the country the desirability of owning Florida should be its first civil administrator.

"I'd have to resign from the army," Jackson said, in broaching the matter to Rachel. "Pensacola might be a pleasant place to live for a while. But I'll refuse unless you go along."

"Of course I'll go with you," she said, seeing that the idea of hoisting the American flag on new American soil stirred his lively imagination.

They went down the Mississippi together, renewing old friendships at Natchez and New Orleans; were again received with highest distinction; marched across country to Pensacola. Don Andrew Jackson he became now to the Spanish inhabitants who were greatly distressed because the mother country had deserted them. Don Andrew of Tennessee never looked more the conquering knight, Rachel thought, than when she saw him riding into the city at the head of the army of peaceful occupation.

The peace was not of long duration. Though Spanish troops sailed away to Cuba, Governor Callava remained and at once incurred the displeasure of his American successor by refusing to surrender the public records of the old régime. A squall, not a tempest; but Don Andrew Jackson had Don Callava in the Pensacola calaboose before he got through with it and the Spanish minister in Washington wore out much shoe leather trotting to the State Department until Don Andrew's performances ceased to be a matter of agitation.

"If I've got to explain to Washington everything I do," said Jackson, gloomily dining with Rachel and young Andrew in their comfortable house in Pensacola, "we might as well go home."

He was disappointed not only in the constant questioning of his own interpretation of his powers but by the fact that he could not appoint to office the friends who had followed him into the South.

"Let us go then," said Rachel with a sigh of relief. "It will be good to be home again."

So he resigned and they went back to the comforts of the new Hermitage, but not until Jackson who had hated Spaniards for forty years, had deported a few lingering officers of the Spanish king who railed offensively about his treatment of Callava.

"When we get home," said Jackson wearily, "we'll thank God for a little peace and quiet."

Tennessee showed her pride by sending him again to the Senate, and Rachel now shared such joys as the capital life afforded. Two years of this and he resigned. But the Hermitage could not obscure him. He must sit in the seat of Washington; they would make him president—the lad from the Waxhaw, with his dark Rachel beside him, closer, dearer as the years rolled on. The great prize was in his hand, but lost when the contest went to the House of Representatives. He bore himself with dignity in his disappointment, but Rachel shed no tears at his defeat.

The plain people of America were not satisfied. They saw him as a majestic figure against the western sky—a tall horseman with his head among the stars. To adoring thousands who never saw him he was the man of the West; the man of the people. John Quincy Adams took the presidency away from him but Old Hickory's time would come!

"The best loved man on this continent and the most trusted." Thus Fowler to Rachel, and she, greatly moved, wept, knowing it to be true.

In Rachel's calm eyes there was a mockery in the quiet of the fields as she looked out over the star-hung landscape, knowing that the morning would bring another deluge of mail and more idolators to the shrine.

Then came the fateful day when a cavalcade cheering, shouting, dashed up from the road with the great news. He had won; he was elected! It was overwhelming, sweeping, like all his victories. She ran away, up to their room, and flung herself upon her knees to thank God and to ask heavenly guidance for him, her lover and husband, and very humbly for herself. He found her there, still on her knees, and lifted her into his arms.

"My dearest, my precious one! Without you it would never have been!"

Outside a growing throng cheered and called his name, demanding that he show himself.

She looked into his eyes and smiled.

"You belong to the nation now," she said.

"But first of all to you!" he cried, catching her hands and bending down to kiss her brow and eyes and lips.

"And what will a little countrywoman like me do in the White House!"

"Be the same dear woman she is at the Hermitage."

She was soon busy, putting things in order with the instincts of her perfect housewifery; for one day they would be back. The presidency was the pinnacle; after

four years of that there could be nothing more. She would have her beloved home again at the Hermitage and at last they would realize the peace that so long had been an elusive and wavering dream. She little knew in those hours of triumph how, in the fury of the campaigns he had been villified, and every incident of his life distorted by savage enemies. The newspapers that had assailed him he kept carefully from her; nor did she guess, so gentle and trusting she was of heart, that that long forgotten trouble over their marriage had been brought to light as a blot upon his honor. She need never know of this; and now that the great goal was won her place would be so high that every venomous tongue would be silenced.

"Clothes!" he said. "Why, of course! We'll show 'em in Washington the best the Cumberland can do in the way of style!"

"I wouldn't want you to be ashamed of me," she said, prepared for his prompt rejoinder that he would be proud of her in any raiment in the most brilliant courts of Europe.

She had early made it a part of her devotion to shield him from worry, and he did not know that for a year she had not been well. Her sisters knew of her discomforts, counseled her to less unsparing labor; but for his sake she made no sign. The strain of entertaining the countless pilgrims who sought them out had borne heavily on the lady of the Hermitage. And while he was preoccupied with the choice of his Cabinet she was often in Nashville busy with her wardrobe.

On a December afternoon, greatly fatigued by her

shopping, she went into a newspaper office to wait for her carriage; glanced over the papers scattered on the table and picked up a pamphlet and read.

An ungenerous fate had at last brought under her eyes one of the campaign diatribes Jackson had been so careful to keep from her. Alone in the dingy little room she read, with amazement changing to horror.

The trip to Natchez, the blunder about the divorce, were described with gleeful malevolence. "Was this," the pamphleteer asked with a virtuous flourish, "the manner of woman that aspired to be the first lady of the land?"

Numbed, bewildered, a dull pain in her heart, she groped her way to the door and bade the coachman drive her home.

Their love had been so sweet! He had been so scrupulous at every point in all that pertained to her separation from Robards. But now——

Driving along the road they had so often traversed happily together a cloud darkened the sun; the fields, the hills on the horizon had become alien, forbidding, menacing. Was she indeed Rachel Donelson Jackson, held up to scorn and the sneers of a cynical world? But it was of him, her dear lover, who had borne this in silence, hidden it from her as he would hide any evil thing, that she thought with a pitiful tenderness.

There was a spring by the Hermitage road where so often they had paused to drink. She bade the driver stop, alighted and drank; laved her burning face, felt refreshed and went home. But there was still that ominous pain in her heart.

She met him at the evening meal, resolved never to let him know, laughed at his banter as to the finery with which she meant to present herself at the inauguration. They would be starting East soon after the happy Christmas they had planned at the Hermitage—their last Christmas at home for a little while. She was speaking of gifts they would make; there must be a watch for young Andrew . . .

"You are not well, my dearest!" he cried suddenly, seeing that she wavered in her chair, her hand clutching her heart.

He carried her to their room and laid her down; sent messengers galloping in quest of doctors.

"Just a little tired, my dearest," she murmured.

But it was more than weariness; there was a wound in her gentle heart beyond any doctor's knowing or skill. Anxious hours and days. He was constantly beside her; clasping her hand—the kind hand, long given to the service of love.

"They are doing nothing for her!" he groaned as she wavered between life and death. He, who had never been vanquished by any foe, found himself powerless against the shadow that drew closer about the Hermitage.

"Be brave, my dearest," she said. "I'm only going away—to rest—in a better place—till you come——"

"Don't leave me now!" he pleaded pitifully. "I need you so much, my love, my dearest one!"

With failing breath she spoke of that first journey, of the dance on the Ohio shore, vivid in her mind for a flickering moment.

"I was afraid—that night—you would never love me and I wanted you so——" Again it was of the building of their first home. "We were so happy—at Hunter's Hill! We used to walk there—by the river, our beautiful river—it was sweet to see the new moon—in the springtime—from the top of the hill. In a little while—a little farther on—beyond the hill—beyond the river—there will be—peace—the peace of God—that passeth understanding—peace—my love——"

And so she died, Rachel Donelson Jackson; with peace and love upon her lips.

They were mute before his grief, the friends who would have died to save him from this sorrow. Great chieftain, leader of men, Jackson the unconquerable! His sobs tore their souls when he realized that the spirit of his Rachel had vanished beyond the winter stars.

"What is there left me now?" he asked plaintively, seeing as the dawn broke that Fowler, Coffee and John Overton had shared his vigil.

"To live—as she would have you live," said Fowler softly. "The people's faith in you gave her great happiness. You are chosen to the highest place in the world; and serving the people in righteousness you will be serving her still."

THE END

THE CAVALIER OF TENNESSEE

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